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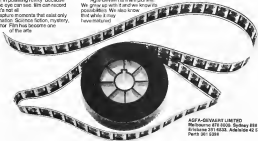
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Kath Connolly

If box-office shortfalls haven't already facilitated the long-harried, but so far less than following, wave of feature films about the American war in Vietnam, recent events quite possibly will. The Chinese positive expedition, plus Vietnam's looking of the Kampuchean rebels, add new chapters to the hitherto confusing story of warfare in Indo-China, which has known only a few months of peace in the past 33 years.

These latest efforts will certainly adjust, once again, shifting Western perspectives on Vietnam. Many people in the USA, in particular, are pointing unconsciously to China as one more example of how great power are played beyond endurance by these insatiable Vietnamese (and their Soviet masters).

I wouldn't be surprised if Hollywood, never usually eager to grasp the reality of American involvement in Vietnam, is already prepared

to drop the whole thing. Nor that many of the few films so far produced on Vietnam — compare this boring movie-cycle with the propagandist subject-matter for Korea — deal squarely with the subject. All that the entire fact that the USA and its allies intervened with massive physical force in an ideologically-motivated civil war and inflicted catastrophic damage upon nation and people. [Note, please, I am not contending that the films should condone this intervention] only that they should at least face up to the reality of what they purport to depict.

American forces stopped fighting in Vietnam in 1975 (American's a year earlier) and South Vietnam was finally overrun in 1975. But 1968's Francis Ford Coppola began his still-unreleased *Apocalypse Now* in 1975 for anyone in Hollywood prepared to put his (or others') money where the national conscience should have been.

That, only last year did the first commercial feature about Vietnam reach our screens. So far, we have seen five — three from

Hollywood, Ted Post's *Go Tell the Spartans*, Joel Zito's *Coming Home* and Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, one of contemporary origins, Sydney J. Furie's *The Boys in Company C*, and, from us, the Australian contribution, Tom Jelliffe's *The Odd Angry Shot*. (This pasteurized, forgetful John Wayne's *Indiscreet*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Boys*, made in 1966, of which more later).

What took them so long? In recent years, other major world events have triggered a rash to chronicle experience, if not judgment.

Distinguished historian and occasional film critic Arthur Schlesinger jun., reviewing *Coming Home* in *The New York Review* of April 26, 1978 says "So many of our national institutions, beginning with the executive and legislative branches of government, have agreed to drive the war out of our consciousness that we must be grateful to Hollywood for its willingness to stir national memories of that awful American adventure. Indeed, the whole period of the sixties has required with extraordinary rapidity the sum



ON FILM



of some remote, exotic, self-contained time." I think he is being kind about *Chasing Home*... and even more generous to Hollywood. Hard on the heads of Aubrey's anxious descendants came Cimino's restless hard-boss to reduce the balance for middle America. As far as these descendants are concerned, the 1960s that Schlegel talks about never happened. The "total adventure" was an abstract, think-tank undertaking in the line of duty to America the Beautiful (which they actually are in all seriousness at the film's conclusion).

The full-scale American shooting war, waged with the most awesome array of firepower yet employed by one nation against another, is a good deal less than the cynicism of the Hollywood films under discussion.

Spartans happens in 1964, when the Americans were still supposed to be "advisers". **Dear Hunter** contains only a brief combat sketch, while **Casting Home**, though deeply concerned with the effects of the war, is confined to the home front.

Curiously, the two non-Hollywood films are at least set in the hottest time of the war — the late 1940s — and both trace the geriatric progress of a small group of war-torn sailors.

All five films, however, show the Americans and allied intervention as some pre-ordained act of God, a natural calamity visited on all the participants by forces outside their control or both. Of course, everything is seen through Western eyes. The Vietnamese are, in the main, passive victims of apocalyptic calamity.

The general attitude toward the Vietnamese is at best incurious, at worst repulsive. We mean the Yanks as threatened and ripped off by mean South Vietnamese, betrayed by refugees, tortured by demonic Viet Cong captives. (The enemy also fights dirty in these parts of the jungle from which American soldiers and marines have failed to flush them.)

The reference is to be drawn from *The Deer Hunter*, *Spartans*, and *Boys* (what the South Vietnamese don't deserve to be saved from) (yes, the last which, with the benefit of hindsight).

From left: Robert De Niro and Christopher Walken in *The Deer Hunter*; Steve Sevan in *The Godfather Part II*; The Boys in Company C; Robert De Niro and John Savage in *The Deer Hunter*; The Boys in Company C; Bruce Stern in *Crash Course*.

we know is going to overtake them. These recent overcomes are strengthened, too, by a sparsity of Blacks on view among the American Coast — the studio was made by accident.

Too, Jeffrey at least avoids such ugly details — thanks to White Australia and his film's general indifference to the Vietnamese. In fact, the Special Air Service protagonists are so remote from the civilian population, they might be in Normandy (that quail did in fact serve there a few years earlier) or some other trouble spot where courage/emergency skills are useful to a military commander.

Admittedly, the Hollywood filmakers are grappling with a subject that was, until the 1970s, unthinkable to most Americans — a war the USA lost. One wonders what, for instance, John Wayne thinks of *Coming Home*.

or *Spansans*. They are more than just a decade removed from his *Green Berets*; they have insisted that great divide which taught the USA that it couldn't order the world in its own image.

Wayne's *Green Berets* was propaganda pure and simple (daisy duff), but so ham-handed that it was largely counter-productive in its attempt to justify the American presence. Wayne, scourge of communies and fellow-travelers in the piping days of McCarthy, at last stood up to be counted when the going became a bit tougher: his film's screenplay, by James Lee Barrett (from a novel by Robert Cohn), is stiff with cliché, and the direction (Wayne shared the credit with Ray Kellogg) is better suited to a B-grade western. David Williams summed it up nicely in the *Monthly Film Bulletin* of September 1964 as "unsettlingly and ironically as much an indictment of the American intervention as its apology for it." Wayne's approach in 1968, however, was utterly consistent with his stance in the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals — "democracy" must be preserved, even if it has to be destroyed in the process.

Now to 1978. . . . The first of the post-Vietnam films seen here was, appropriately enough, *Go Tell the Beeswax*, which is a kind of counter-fairy. In 1964, there were merely 12,000 American "advertisers" on hand, telling the South Vietnamese what to do and, in some cases, showing them how. Denzler Ted Post and screenwriter Wendell Mayes rather neatly preface the disaster that is to come in their story of a small American regular army unit.

The Americans lead a motley collection of Vietnamese to occupy a remote, shambled hamlet of no strategic value beyond the possibilities of American splash-and-sustain. Ignoring the war from a distance, of course. Predictably, basists and defenders are overrun by the Viet Cong — as were the French before them. (The film's title derives from an inscription on a French army graptoid which basists quoted immediately after Thermopylae: "Go tell the Spaniards, thou who perish by, that here obedience to their laws is no law.")

Post develops two contemporary conflicts within the larger war — Vietnamese versus Americans and, among the Yavos themselves, professional propagandists against amateur idealists. The American soldiers distrust Vietnamese susceptibilities ("It's their war"), are humiliated by vocal ARVN commanders and are finally betrayed by cowardly deep-bellied.

Within the American military, the worldly-wise press, represented by Earl Lancaster, know the cause is hopeless, but, like Spartans before them, stoically do their duty. The implication, as in *The Deer Hunter*, is that the Vietnamese were scarcely worth saving; but *Go Tell the Beeswax* the war might have been won with an honest military effort.

The Bees in *Company C* is, in essence, a posthumous of the American role, although overlaid with "war is hell" protestations and anti-establishment rhetoric. The film's origins are even more round than its theme: produced in Hong Kong by Golden Harvest-Good Times Films, shot in the Philippines with an American cast and directed by a Canadian, Sidney J. Furie, Furie's litography borrowed less from British pop music (*The Young Ones*), to say drama (*The Ispahani Film*), and showing tongue (*Lady Sings the Blues*), but he

has obviously had a good look at Altman's *MASH*.

The film's dialogue overlaps and stumbles in an Altmanian confusion. There is even a version of that *MASH*-style football match (Company C's soccer team refuses to throw a knee to please the South Vietnamese and as a result are ordered back into combat as the Tet offensive begins).

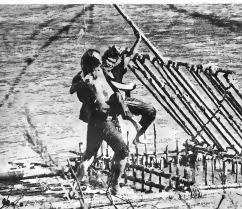
In some other respects, however, *Bees* goes the very war-film bonus awarded by Altman. The propaganda is recognizable stereotypes — a resentful Negro leader-in-suit-of-himself, the disillusioned volunteer, the comical but an objector forced to toe the line, and the stoic war captain for whom happiness is a high body-count. Furie and screenwriter Rick Nelson seem to be saying that, with boys like these, Vietnam might have been "held" — dismembers and self-servers at the top lot it.

Held for what, one may well ask. Does the least outbreak of fighting, or the advent of the host people's unity, the intervention — or, maybe it seems all the more morally and tactically reprehensible? The films under discussion aren't much help in seeking answers. They may, as the other hand, confirm a few prejudices.

The last requiem of the five is Jeffrey's effort, a creditable volume portrait of the Australian back force (which lost 415 men in a six-year campaign). But *The Odd Angry Shot* is very likely to be the only Australian warfare on Vietnam — and, therefore, one rejects its narrative subjectivity.

I checked the reactions of a discerning colleague, a journalist who served as a combat military officer with the task force. He assures me that the film is, for the most part, faithful to the reality he knew. His criticisms were of basist dialogues between members of the SAS

An American presence in the jungle of North Viet Cong territory in *The Deer Hunter*.



"The Deer Hunter is not a political or a polemical film."

Philip French, *The Observer* (London)

"Permit me, Philip, to observe I cannot but admire your nerve. It's not political, you say? What picture were you watching, pray?"

The images that filled the screen Would have made Dr Goebbels green; The goodies were Caucasian guys, The baddies all had slanted eyes. Do you forget who raped Vietnam, Or must I draw a diagram? Gunships, napalm, towns bombed flat —

Perhaps you may have heard of that? Or do you think though millions died, There is a case for genocide? A snow job — oh, but I forgot: The wedding-scene was finely shot. To brutalize the human heart, Tell the Big Lie and call it Art. You'd fail, if you were in a camp, To see the purpose of the ramp, And, having such a simple mind, You'd call the ovens well-designed."

Roger Woddis, *New Statesman*

petrol within minutes of the enemy and the first fire-fight on a bridge. He praised the reconstruction of the Nui Ba Den base camp, signified the exotic exotisms in scenes of camp life, and dismissed the Vung Tau base scene as "unlucky." But his overall reaction was favorable.

Significantly, what I dislike most did not bother him at all — that is, the film's lack of commitment or engagement on the war and the Australians' part in it. I suspect our differences are much the same as in 1979 as they would have been in 1968, when he did kindly as he saw it and I was among that section of Australians who fiercely asserted what was being done to the Vietnamese people in our name.

Jeffrey worried behind that *The Odd Angry Shot* wasn't to be a war film, but one about men at war. And the film serves notice of its tone in the prologue, when a guest at a farewell party adjures a departing soldier: "Get one for me, mate?" Just who is to be got, and why, is of little moment, then or later. For these unaccounted with the tension — and it should be remembered that lists of people now entitled to sue "R" films were in primary school when these events took place — the soldier might as well be on his way to fight in *Star Wars*.

Comment is confined to the puzzle is not of a hobby Graham Kennedy delivers about the poor man always fighting the rich man's wars (and compensates it — unluckily — in Sirs Sumner's recipe for writing war in *All Quiet on the Western Front*). This sort of chicken-hearted cynicism is a poor substitute for any explanation of what he felt the Australians were doing there. The excuse, "It's not in the book" (meaning William Noble's novel of the same title, on which Jeffrey closely bases his screenplay) doesn't work.

Whatever his reasons, the sorry fact is that Jeffrey needs a watershed event in our history (never had a large body of Australian troops gone to war with less than overwhelming support from the nation), yet declines to make a statement about it. Worse, the characters let full remarks about anybody back home during. They are doing wrong (they — or did I dream that day in 1970 when 100,000 people sat down in Bourke St? Not in any sense for defendants of *The Odd Angry Shot* to its shortcomings in the Hollywood film, which we will examine farther).

Unlike the other Hollywood products, *Coming Home* wears its heart on its sleeve — but it is bleeding for a wounded USA, not Vietnam. And the film suffers a crisis of confidence, trailing off into unneeded explanation, instead of the forthright assertion *Andy* leads us to expect. He established itself proud for the hero (Jon Voight), a returned veteran, to make a reasoned case against war — so people like him were in fact doing all over the USA at this very time. The Voight character has already made it personal, matured, stand by choosing himself to a marine recruitment depot. But when he speaks to an audience of high school students, who have just been addressed by a recruiting sergeant, the script unfolds a bolt of old-fashioned heroism: the forthright declaration we expect. He gives a rambling discourse bland enough to mollify Barry Goldwater. The strangest thing he has to say about the war is that "there just isn't enough reason for it."

The script of *Coming Home* apparently suffered a number of modifications — and it shows. Tough on the surface, it is soft in the core. The original concept of writer Nancy Dowd and Jane Fonda may have adopted a more explicit anti-war stance, but subsequent

rewritings evidently diluted the impact. In the final credits, the screenplay is attributed to Walter Salt and Robert C. Jones, with story by Nancy Dowd (Dowd and Voight have said this little of the original script remained). It is also worth noting that veteran screenwriter Salt was one who suffered in an earlier American line of trial — he was blacklisted. And, perhaps significantly, a crucial development in the plot occurs as the result of FBI surveillance.

Even though *Coming Home* looks at explicit commitment, there is no doubt about where it stands. The film's chief concern, however, is less with the rights or wrongs of the American intervention as with the catastrophic effects this has on Americans — in Vietnam and at home.

Had it not been conceived at virtually the same time, *The Deer Hunter* would seem to be a reply to *Coming Home*. The thematic origins of Cimino's film, however, go back a good deal farther. It is the spiritual descendant of *The Great Escape*, most directly in the few war scenes, but also in its unquestioning acceptance of the American involvement.

Cimino's lessons take an unexcusable tone, going to Vietnam — after what must surely be the longest establishment sequence in the history of motion pictures — but when they finally do, the film's moody atmosphere dissolves in a burst of good old-time comic banter. A pathos-laden North Vietnamese woman impressively blows up a shelter connected with women and children, and is followed by Robert de Niro, striding from behind like an ancient Wayne! Later, and

Left: *The Boys in Company C*, the first major film about the Vietnam war since the 1973 ceasefire. Right: Sally Field (Jane Fonda) and her war veteran husband (Jon Voight) in *Coming Home*, a film concerned with the effects of war on the American participants.





South Vietnamese troops in action in *The Deer Hunter*. The film, which implies that the Vietnamese were scarcely more cruel.



John Travolta in *John Woo's The Godfather Part II*, the first depiction of the moral dilemmas that war

with a minimalist allegory that just after the opening, profligate American prisoners are forced to play a form of Russian roulette by their brutal Viet Cong captors.

However, signaling an awareness that times have indeed changed, the film goes on to depict similar dehumanization being staged for the benefit of big-brother, fourth-Vietnamese (Incidentally, two of America's best-known foreign correspondents, who between their sporty escapades in Vietnam, told me that though many perverse things did occur in Saigon, they strongly doubted the authenticity of this one). Orino's message here, of course, is that the South Vietnamese are just as bad as the North Vietnamese and a part on both sides became.

The Deer Hunter does have something in common with *Coming Home*, in that both are primarily concerned with the effects the war has upon the American participants. However, where *Coming Home* also examines shifting perspectives among the civilian population and ultimately reflects a gathering mood of dissent, the social anxiety of the Postmodernist mid-1970s (at a time when even so-called "liberals" remain profoundly, patently, unquestioning. Not a part of the opposition to the war then sweeping the USA gets through on the constantly-playing television and radio sets. Some intimations of the national faith have been reached even this decade of the status quo (note wondrous whither, it is the closing sequence set in 1975 they have just heard of Watergate).

The Deer Hunter is determinedly apolitical (which is another way of being reactionary). Orino's good buddies — and that Vietnamese adventures, for that matter — have as much ideological motivation as a crack of cream cheese. Not for Orino the Deafening voices of The Green Berets (his doc-hunters are red-blooded American boys, too, but like the other post-Vietnam filmmakers, Orino and screenwriter Deke Williamson have the advantage of hindsight).

In 1968, Vietnam was another war the USA was going to win, because defeat was unthinkable. Ten years later, the whole damn schism was just isn't worth thinking about.

I have heard it argued, that, in essence, *The Deer Hunter* is anti-war. Proponents of this notion point to the film's depiction of the horrors, terrors and brutalities of the conflict, the devastation of (Vietnamese) civil populations, and the shattered lives of two of the three young American macho-heroes who go off to fight. And it must be said that the film is so warily alive that all sorts of inter-

pretations may be placed on artifacts such as one of its almost-30-minute audios to rears.

But Coppola isn't taking a stand on war. He is on record that his film is purely about the sort of men who volunteered for Vietnam in search of adventure, the background from which they emerged and to which the survivors returned.

What he is doing is a review of the line American presidents, Richard Nixon and, before him, Lyndon Johnson, kept harping — that, in its purest heartland, the USA was for participation in Vietnam. Not, of course, because of any real conviction, but from the gut feeling expressed in a hunch hanging over that interminable wedding reception: "Seeing God and Country Friendly." (The husband, I'll bet the sickened Duke, told the son: "These guys continue to have captured Hollywood after all.")

With five down on the probability, only Coppola's film to go in the current cycle, we are still looking for that diaphanous film at the end of the tunnel (oh, nostalgia, remember that phrase beloved of speechwriters and leader writers?). Perhaps, however, it's rapidly too much of any further film provided largely, if not wholly, on commercial concerns to deal honestly with the American chapter in Vietnam — particularly one from Hollywood. What Schweinger reasonably describes as "the most superficial and shameful war in American history," may have taken too deeply into the American psyche for an account of it to be envisioned, let alone become thinkable reality, while it's so fresh in the memories of a majority of filmmakers.

After all, while the Korean war aroused a spate of mid-war clichés, it has yet to be seriously examined by Hollywood in an objective light (the black status of M*A*S*H accurately qualified). The same can be said about World War 2. William Wellman showed up under the wire (the *Story of G.I. Joe*) while the war was still on, William Wyler dabbled honestly enough with the difficulties of war in *The Best Years of Our Lives*, but it wasn't until 1963 (and in Britain) that blacklisted writer Carl Foreman presented a full-scale, realist picture of the way it was for the American draftee in *The Soldiers*.

The first Hollywood sound films to face the realities of World War 2 depicted the soldiers of other countries — Germans in *Lone Menace's All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) and the French in *Hawthorne's Road to Glory* (1936). When it came to portraying the Yanks in the trenches, American films, as late as 1952, were still marching to a jingo beat, as in John Ford's remake of the

Maxwell Anderson play *What Price Glory?* (It should be emphasized that these comparison references are confined to fiction features. If Hollywood had tried to do in this field what Peter Dinkov achieved in his documentary *Hearts and Minds*, or Ernie de Antonio in *Year of the Pig*, or even mirrored the authenticity of William Wyler's uncritical portrayal during World War 2 in *The Memphis Belle*, the Vietnam picture would be a lot stronger).

Is it reasonable, though, to ask such things of Hollywood, even the modern Hollywood of interlocking financial power block, myriad production packages and the conglomerate-splashed studio hierarchy for its "war product," whatever its content and origin? Two major films of recent years suggest that the cause is not absolutely hopeless.

The first, Coppola's *Godfather II* achieves in one brilliant 15-minute sequence a most telling exposure of American corruption of pre-Castro Cuba, and, certainly, in terms accessible to every finger, why the overthrow of the Batista regime was such an inevitable. Yet the film, like its predecessor was financed and released by Paramount, a subsidiary of the sat Gulf and Western conglomerate, which has billion-dollar interests in the Caribbean.

American writers Barbara Ehrenreich and David Talbot comment in their recent book *Corporate Defiance* (South End Press, Boston): "Despite the fact that *Godfather II* was distributed by a large conglomerate, it may be interpreted, on one level, as a critique of corporate power. In one reasonable sense, representatives of American multinationals and organized crime either together or else as a side of the same of Cuba." Why did Gulf and Western, board chairman, Charles Hirschman, who apparently asked a close internal Paramount agent to fax backing of such a film? The question is material — the answer, of course, is in the pressures for the original *Godfather*.

Another cue involving Gulf and Western pointed to by Ehrenreich and Talbot is Bernardo Bertolucci's Marxist epic, 1980. Paramount insisted the film be cut to the four hours, eight minutes, six seconds, by most of its revolutionary content removed. The explanation, the authors suggest, could be quite simple: "Perhaps Bialdani felt that 1980 would make as much money as ... *Last Tango in Paris*."

This is not to suggest that only "name" directors can hope to make realistic films about Vietnam. The subject is thickened with added questions, psychological, emotional, political and, most importantly, economic. But Huntley Wexler, cinematographer of *Coming Home*, demonstrated 10 years ago, when he directed *Midnight Cowboy*, that it is possible, though no doubt extremely difficult, to finance films unrelated to prevailing norms and ideas. *Midnight Cowboy*, which he wrote, directed and shot (and Paramount backing) was set against the backdrop of the infamous Democratic National Convention of 1968. It is a brilliant, incisive examination of violence and alienation in American society (and, incidentally, presents mounting opposition to the Vietnam war).

No, the climate isn't impossible for films about Vietnam that call a spade an Armalite. But it's impossible with a certain degree of unreliability. However, in searching the records for examples and comparisons, I get the impression that old war films never die, they just mutate. Stated by Sir Sean of the *Green Berets*.

AN ANIMATED PROGRESS REPORT ON:

GRENDL GRENDL GRENDL

Grendel, who?
The monster slain by the
hero Beowulf in the
feature-length, 7th-century
Poem of the same name, that's who.
(Beowulf is the earliest epic work
extant in the English language.)

BEOWULF.

Heort! we Gif-Dena on gifer-dagum
fead-eapunga byrn geferon,
ka 3a aþelgasa ælra framdon.
Oð 3aþel Botling weofena briddara,
manega weofura, mæca-wita cnihta.
Egode ead, aþelra dæd weort
feowera fæder, 3a þes feofa gield, etc.
(If you call that English.)

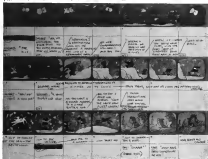
About 90 minutes.
About 60,000 person-hours.
About 50,000 drawings.
About \$200,000 (the VHS,
prints, DVD's and so)
It's about the
7th century
monster...

(More about
Beowulf
later.)

More, recently than the
7th century (1991 actually)
the V.S. novelist John
Gardner produced a version
of the Beowulf story in which
he reduced the role of the chief
protagonist and Grendel became
the central, sympathetic character.
Lovely. We bought the
right to the book.

Why?
That's the famous line.
Al, who's worked with this
a lot (and you can see it done
at all, very well, but we don't
do something like that). All's
about making it... about
about making it... about making it...
happy to be famous too,
when G.G.G. is finished.
(Christmas day)

How the film was written (if you call that writing):



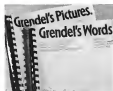
1ST DRAFT
90 pages like
this

2ND DRAFT
The same 90
pages, with
drawings, plus
about 20 more.

(Six months or more
of otherwise
spare time)

FINAL DRAFT
This is one of the
1200 pages of the
production storyboard,
a document that has
assigned each scene
for the computer, asked
around stories,
animators et al.





THE MUSIC

On about the 2nd draft, a funny thing happened: the film turned into a musical.

The intention had always been to put in a lot of music, which sits well with any animated film, but especially a Grendel kind of film; and Bruce Swenson had been invited from the start. The trouble began with a character in Gaudin's book called The Shaper. He was a metaphysician,

really, for the original declamatory style of Beowulf, and the plot dictated that he should have a couple of big numbers. After mulling these, it seemed a pity not to let the other principal characters have a song, too. We finished up with seven songs.

RECORDING: It's long before the animation, and the animators work from a 'reading' of the dialogue, fix etc. For the sessions, we made copies of the storyboard, and copies of a more conventional type dialogue script.



Peter Ustinov lent his considerable weight to the project as the voice of Grendel.

At one point in the script Grendel (who is 12'6" in his late teens!) reflects: "When I was young, they said, 'What a big sport, when I was four or five, they said I was big for my age, but not to worry, after that, you grow up.'"

After reading this, Mr Ustinov observed, "But this time, it's anthropomorphic! We hope that audience attribute Mr Ustinov's other characteristics—personality, wit, charm—to Grendel, so that he is a character of substance from the first time we meet him."

The casting of such a considerable presence for Grendel's voice posed one problem: Beowulf, The Dragon and The Shaper—Grendel's peers in the film—now needed voices of equal charisma. Keith Michell agreed to do The Shaper, which led Bruce Swenson to compose three delightfully big, tough songs for him. Arthur Dignam performed Beowulf with a chilling, George Sanders-ish edge, and Art also gave us a dithery old Dragon who manages a bromura duet with Grendel.



The voice sessions went smoothly, despite initial problems. Ed Rasser (was) Bobby Wright (now) Joe Stone (wasn't) and others were recorded together in Melbourne, but Peter Ustinov was only available in Sydney, and Keith Michell in Adelaide. We had to record bits of dialogue all over the place and stitch it together later. It all worked perfectly. The vocals were recorded to discrete mono tracks which were later replaced by full orchestral backing.



VIVE LA FRANCE !...

French TV, a revolution



Remémorer BASTILLE DAY
July 14th 1979 on PBS
magazine no 1

Well, we are at it again!
Add cultural value
to national day.
And for our celebration...

magazine

no 1

LES BRONZÉS

*vous souhaitent
un
joyeux Noël
et une
très bonne année*



occurrence. Now it is particularly unusual for the rule regarding a minimum of 50 per cent French content to be broken; in 1975, local films formed only 23 per cent of A2's repertoire, but the situation was only too happy to pay the FF 10,000 (\$2175) fine.

While there can be little doubt that the number of films permitted on television has considerable bearing on box-office receipts, the value of the French content issue, in the present circumstances where television quotas are already rapidly depleting stocks, is surely questionable.

Another aspect of the quota system can be seen in a less obvious, but equally pertinent, effect of television — its role as the thespian's window (a body arranged and registered step-by-step for French cinema. As such, the manner in which the films it chooses to show helps to propagate the notion of overall quality⁸ which the French population currently has of its national cinema. Remembering that the amount paid by the television services is generally calculated on the basis of the film's commercial value — i.e. on the number of people who saw it during its initial exhibition period — it is inevitable that the financially-feasible film will be within a fairly narrow range of quality, running from the tolerable to the highly stupid.

Philippe Bion, head of films at FR3, admits that his job is a certain number of French films every year simply to fulfil the quota, even though his choice is limited. "As a general rule", he says, "we try never to go below a certain level of mediocrity." Presumably, perhaps, but as one which, unfortunately, admits the existence on television of two kinds of cinematic mediocrity: one which is possible and tolerable at least in the hands of the quins, and one which is unacceptable at any level.

If one adds to all the films commercially out of reach those whose incredible inanity immediately excludes them, and those responsible to program because of excessive sex or violence, it is easy to see how the quota system takes television into a ghastly place for a whole series of unreflexive and boring products. This aspect of quality, conducted at cinema's least illustrious level, works purely and simply as constant counter-program.

In December 1976, copies of the Maleskov report, prepared under the auspices of the Centre National de Cinématographie, which revealed how television was slowly killing the cinema, were handed to Tournier (then, then Minister of Finance, and Francine Girard, then Secretary of State for Culture. Little was achieved. In April, the following year, top government representatives met with the annual congress of film directors to discuss the crisis; in particular, the television-cinema relationship. Again there were no concrete results.

Eventually, the bubble of discontent finally burst, and, on January 12, 1978, a full-page open letter to President Giscard d'Estaing appeared in the Paris press, revealing the numerous effects of television and presenting various statistics we have given elsewhere in this article.

All fans that something positive was achieved, and, in 1978 advanced, the legislative atmosphere between television and cinema became apparent. Channel FR3 agreed not to program films, except television films, on Friday and Saturday nights, that on one

Wednesday a month (Wednesday being a very popular cinema-going day in France) films would be replaced by an original television production, and on Sunday the late movie would not start before 10.15 p.m. Television-cinema co-productions, already more noticeable during 1977, were actively encouraged.

Full-length television films (for example, Maurice Roni's *Barilichy* which was financed by Channel A2) were given commercial release only a matter of months after their initial transmission. And in what could prove to be a decisive experiment, Jacques Rivard's *Ne pleurez pas*, a "dramatic thriller" financed equally by the two industries, had virtually simultaneous premieres on the large and small screens. After its projection by TF1 on March 15, it was consequently released two days later in six Paris cinemas by Gaumont, in the hope that the free television publicity would work to its advantage.

Later in the year, the two official French critics selected for the Cannes Festival would prove to be co-producer by the television channel. Anne-Marie Meunier's *Melrose* by A2, and Claude Chabrol's *Vieilles Mœurs* by FR3.

With these closer links, a change was also discernible in the attitudes of actors, directors and technicians — no longer was it frowned upon to make a television film. A recent significant example of this was the very popular series *Maisque le juge*, in which Simone Signoret stars, from time to time, other cinema stars like Nathalie (Delfon) made weekly appearances on the small screen. Each episode was produced by a different cinema crew and director (including Nadine Tringali, Edouard Molinaro and Claude Chabrol).

Naturally, this new-found co-operation works to the advantage of both parties: provided with extra opportunities, the cinema people are willing to work for reduced fees if the finished product is likely to be seen by a huge audience, while television also benefits by employing prestige names and talented directors, actors and crew. Projects can also be realised which would otherwise be impossible. Nina Compton's *Un ours pas comme les autres*, listing six hours and featuring the talents of Arletty, Gaudy and André Duquenois, cost FF 4,800,000 (\$1 million), a figure that in the cinema world would have been barely sufficient for a full-length film.

No doubt such co-productions⁹ still have their problems (like general principles involved and the distribution of label costs are often unclear in the film industry), but these initial steps will hopefully lead to a further cementing of relations.¹⁰ As Gilles Jacob, Cinéma's new behind-the-scenes, said: "We have to rethink the relationship between the two forms of expression. From now on, we are putting up a new generation of young spectators who have forgotten books and have been brought up, cultivated and opened to the world by the cinema."¹¹

8. It may not be coincidental that Rivard was chosen for this particular experiment as he previously made the film *Mon très petit* which had attracted 125,000 viewers in January 1977, an unusually successful start for a film when cinema seats are being made, the supply will soon dry up. The Paris television cinema programme will be a first step towards a film festival.

9. One may be excited by suggesting, too hastily, that the television industry has suddenly become the "democrat" of cinema in that it will supply full-length films each year that can be made, distributed, and seen by the public television cinema programme will be a first step towards a film festival.

10. Quoted in "Cinéma et télévision" (*Jeune France* 5, 1978, p. 21) under the headline.



Claude Chabrol's table on the table: a mixed company about French cinema for television, which attracted 1.3 million people at the week.

QUANTITY and QUALITY

Television is certainly the most obvious reason for cinema's crisis, but the quantity and quality of the films being produced may, in their own way, be equally important factors. The annual increase in the number of French films would appear, at first glance, to be a healthy sign: 1966 = 95, 1970 = 110, 1973 = 133, 1976 = 154, 1977 = 222 (compared Italy 1973 = 233, 1977 = 156).

On closer inspection, however, one sees in 1977's total more than 100 "losing" ("A" classification), and another 76 co-productions with foreign interests. Of the remaining 900, 30 were entirely financed by a loan between FF 500 and FF 800,000 (\$104,230 and \$166,750) from the "advance against receipts" commission. Despite their low production costs, some of these films were clearly not viable propositions, others were not even distributed and very rarely did those that were have a commercial future sufficient to repay the loan. Certainly, these films represented a negative quantity in economic terms, and by decreasing them the total is reduced to some 70 — a considerable drop on the number of genuine French features produced in 1975, and a natural contributor to the decline in standards.

French cinema may well be caught in a quantitative versus quality, the fewer French films there are, the fewer fingers there will be for French cinema, the fewer persons there are, the fewer French films there will be.

Are the artistic consequences, however, any more comforting than the economic ones? Is there also a crisis in quality? In answering such

8. The quality of French films will be considered less. 9. Quoted in *Cinéma*, "Le cinema français public" (*Le Cinéma*, December 12-13, 1978, p. 12) under the headline.



Michael **PATE**

Shortly after I picked up *The Adrenaline Jinx* in 1992, I was given a copy of *Tier*. I quite enjoyed the story, it has a delicious little premise. It's the type you have to analyze to see what's in it.

I wasn't sure whether it would be the sort of film that could be made here, but I thought it had great value as a story. It dealt with the only thing I am interested in in film, and that is human values. I am not interested in other types of films.

Initially I tried to contact Colleen McCullough through the bookshop channels, but simply didn't get any response. Nobody seemed to know anything about her. I then heard she was at the Yale School of Medicine so I wrote to her. She wrote back immediately saying that her mother was a great fan of mine, and that she would be delighted for me to have the rights to the book, adding that it would be nice to see the film made in Australia.

At the time there were a number of other people who had discovered the property and wanted it. They had good connections in the USA, but Collaen firmly took care of the thing, and soon I was negotiating with Harner & Row for the rights.

Subsequently, Collins told us that she was in the midst of writing another book, which was giving her a lot of problems. It was called *The Fifth Book*. Later she told us that it had been accepted in the USA and would be published in hardback. It went to auction and was sold for US\$1.8 million.

What stage had you reached with the script at the time?

I gave the book to one of the distributors here, and he thought it was marvelous. He said it would make a very fine film. I was still working on *The Mango Tree* then, so I didn't start any writing on *Time* until the end of 1935.

Did you ever think of getting

Clockwise from top left: Michael Frie is seen from Center of the United States Valley Days Renaissance; The Court Jester; Power Without Glory, driving The Magma One, on tour during Time; an episode of *Star Trek: Voyager*; and a scene from *The Savage Days*, and *Reign of the Gaudyfishers*. Center: Michael Frie drives the top production of *The*

Michael Pate's film career began in Australia in 1939 with an appearance in Charles Chauvel's "40,000 Haeasemen". During the '40s, his roles in Chauvel's "Sons of Matthew" and Ralph Smart's "Bitter Springs" established him as a promising new acting talent.

Then, in 1950 Pate moved to the USA where, during the next 18 years, he was a supporting actor in more than 50 feature films and 300 television series. While in Hollywood, Pate also wrote scripts for MGM, RKO and CBS-TV, taught acting, and published a book titled *The Film Actor*.

In 1968, he returned to Australia as associate producer for Columbia Pictures' "Age of Consent", and on its completion became involved in Australian television — as a producer, director, scriptwriter and actor. He appeared in the long-running series "Matlock Police", and played Archbishop Malone in the ABC's successful "Power Without Glory".

In 1975, Pate wrote and produced his first feature film, "The Mango Tree", which was directed by Kevin Dolson, and starred Geraldine Fitzgerald, Robert Helmsmann and Christopher Pate.

"Tim" marks Pate's debut as a feature film director; he also wrote the script and produced it. Based on the novel by Colleen McCullough, it features American actress Piper Laurie and the talented new local actor, Mel Gibson, in the title role.

During the final editing stages of "Tim", Pate was interviewed at his Sydney home by Peter Bellby and Scott Murray. He begins by discussing how he obtained the rights to "Tim".

someone else to write the screenplay for "Tim"?

Originally with *The Mango Tree* I tried a couple of writers, but I found it was impossible to enter into a contract with them. You can have a discussion with a writer and agree to a certain amount of money, but you inevitably get one of those Americanized eyes of contracts that does everything but take your underpants off. They try to write in buy-backs and all that kind of stuff.

I am very old-fashioned in this particular regard. If I buy somebody's work, that's it. Total ownership. Don't give that son-of-a-bitch a thing in his contract he can give you one haire for if he wants a percentage, or if he wants a restriction on other rights, that's fine. But don't give him the right to buy back the property if you

don't get it off the ground within two years. It takes a long time to set up a film out here.

So, I went to the Australian Film Commission and said I couldn't find another writer; they suggested I write it myself.

With Tim, I felt, hell, I can write it as well as anybody, and just started.

What changes did you make to the story?

When I read Callison's book a second time, I realized that much of it was very repetitive, and there was a series of almost similar statements going through the book. But once I had determined there was an essence and a structure to it, I could sit down and make my notes, and go from there.

The whole process I applied to Colleen's book was to simplify the story line, removing certain details,

which I felt were unnecessary, and deleting certain anachronisms in the story because of the period in which it had been written. I have never quite pinned Gullson down to the exact year she wrote the book, but I would say it was written in the late '40s. For example, it seemed extraordinary that a lady would decide to marry somebody, send him home to the house, then go into hospital and have a hysterectomy as that she was not able to have a second child. I felt in today's climate that

The whole core of the story, as far as Colleen was concerned, was the relationships between Mary and Tim, between Tim and his family, and the involvement of Mary in Tim's family relationship. So, it was a constantly circulating involvement for both characters.

The script is unusually a two-hander for Tom and Mary — which has to be the most difficult time to write, act, or direct. It's all right in situations where two people are intensely involved, with sex, all over the place, and everything working for you including World War 2. But a simple story has its problems to be real and believable.

I found it extremely tricky to pull the essence out of the book, and the book is quite a bulky piece of writing.

Did you find that the dialogue in the book, particularly Tina's, was changed dramatically in your screenplay, and then again once you shot the various scenes?

The dialogue I wrote for Tim was written over and over, and so that he never had to use a word that was more than a couple of syllables, except when he was learning to read. During the shooting there were a number of areas where I showed the cast to improvise. In some scenes we discussed what they might be saying and if they came up with their own dialogue, I wrote them also (sometimes where I just gave them a broad idea of what the conversation should be).

What I tried to give the cast was a dash of freedom. I never insisted they had to be precise. It was going exactly the way it came off, because it had this sense of a man

know someone to it.

Piper Lums is used to that type of improvisation, as is Moll Gibson. There are, however, certain scenes where the improvisation didn't always work, but it's now only a matter of editing and taking the best of what we have.

Were you concerned that the audience would find Tim's handling, and the situations he faced himself, a source of amusement?

I think people tend to get embarrassed and giggle at someone who is tutored, and I think it would have been something that could have occurred if I had followed Colleen's book more closely. In simplifying the story, a lot of these situations were removed. Although Tim still does funny things, he goes, states of people and waxes, and from a lot. But I have tried to find it in such a way that the audience won't find it amusing. It is important that the marriage between Tim and Mary is credible. I don't want these letters running through the house and people whispering, "Heh! She's marrying a idiot!"

It is unfortunate that people have these attitudes towards the handicapped, because as a moment, it's not a person's fault; it is an accident, it's fate. And often a handicapped person is struggling to get out of that body and a spirit trapped — to work, talk and participate.

Is this stressed in the film?

In Tim's case, his impairment is only slight. His disadvantage is more social and, therefore, there is the potential of change. This is brought out very positively in one scene where Tim is playing with

marco-disabled orphaned children, while inside the school they are talking about him, and about various methods of teaching. We feel sorry for Tim, but in his that with love and care he can live a relatively normal life.

When did you decide on Piper Lums to play the female lead?

Initially I must have talked to half a dozen international people, including Deborah Kerr, Jean Simmons, and Glenda Jackson. Glenda was very interested, but wasn't available until August of 1982. So the budget went up and down, and finally we decided to use an all-Australian cast.

I suggested three who could have been suitable, but again my readers set light on the whole thing. They couldn't decide on how much money we should spend. Eventually, we decided to go with an international name and chose Julie Harris, but again that fell through. So after a lot of thought, we settled on Piper Lums.

So you changed from wanting to use a foreign star, to an all-Australian cast, but then settled for a foreign star. Was this brought about by the investors?

I think there is a tendency among producers and public investors to set their eyes on the overseas market, and it is my belief that if you have a foreign star playing a suitable part in an Australian film, you have more possibility of acceptance and recognition from overseas markets. For example Richard Chamberlain, who starred in *The Last Wave*, has an enormous following in the USA — perhaps not in the cinema, but certainly on television — and his name up-front inevitably helped to sell the

film. Gertrude Pringault put this time with *The Minge Tree*.

I think this factor can be helpful to us. At the same time I think we should develop local stars who will gradually get more recognition overseas, say, Helen Morse has done. She has been in two gold films out here and has subsequently worked overseas.

Generally, people are ambivalent about this issue, and I don't think it's going to be settled until we have two kinds of successes: one with a foreign star playing in an Australian film that is accepted and makes good money in the larger markets around the world, and another with a purely Australian cast playing in a film that is accepted abroad. Once we have these two types of successes we will get rid of all the cheap criticisms which we still suffer under.

I lived in the USA for many years and many times people said, "Michael, it's amazing how well you have learned to speak English, coming from Australia." Our reputation, particularly in the USA, has been miserable. I think it's increasing now, and if it does, we may be able to sell local film products anywhere in the world.

Is the recognition on screens such as Piper Lums being primarily intended to attract the attention of distributors?

I think it can help attract distributors to look at a film. But also from a marketing point of view, when you get a name like Richard Chamberlain on the marquee, people say, "Oh, Richard Chamberlain!" I remember him in that television series, or "I remember him in *The Music Lovers*." It's an added value.

When Americans see an



Australian film, they think, "Well American audiences understand the language and will identify with it." So we are at a crucial selling disadvantage. We are in the uncomfortable position of trying to sell products that is not necessarily needed by an American market. It will be the rare American distributor or exhibitor who will pick up Australian product unless it has some hook. Someone like Piper Lums definitely helps because she is known to Americans.

Was that something you confirmed with American distributors or exhibitors?

No. When I first thought about it, she had just had the nomination for *Carrie*.

Is it tempting for a producer, such as yourself, to go a step further and pay about \$1.5



The wedding at Doreen's wedding, in a scene from *Tim*. From left, Tim (Tim Gibson), and his parents Tim (Adele Kerr) and Tim (Tim Gibson).



Mary Gibson (Piper Lums) watches Tim during an outing in the beach in *Tim*.



Mary Horton (Piper Laurie) is an attractive woman in her mid-40s, unmarried and at ease with her career and her companionable if understanding house life. She meets Tim (Mel Gibson) when, as a builder's laborer working next door, he is asked to help with her garden. Tim is a fine-looking young man, handsome and strongly built. He is 25 years old and good at his work. He is also apparently satisfied with a condition that might have been remedied if his parents, Ivan and Ryn Merritt (Wayn Karas, Pat Eberhart), were educated and had the decency to know how best to help instead. They and his sister, Deanne, Deborah Kennedy) have given him love and understanding. In return Tim gives them and moves through life with a quiet, a gentleness and candor.

Because her usual gardeners have injured his back, Mary arranges for Tim to garden for her regularly. Gradually a friendship develops. On this point it is an admission for someone who treats his naturally and kindly. For Mary it is at first an interest in helping him to read to park, and to understand a little more of things he needs to know in life. When Deanne remarries the wealthy Mick Harrington (David Hower) Tim is heart-broken. Mary tries to explain marriage and Tim asks her to promise never to marry and go away. When his mother has a heart attack and dies, Tim is lost and bewildered. He had never understood death until Mary explained it to him. Not without tears and Gorette, a lunacy and Mary offers friendship. Tim is jealous, though he doesn't understand why.

Mary sees a television program in which John Mullan (Michael Chabon), an expert in the care of mildly retarded children, discusses what can be done to help these youngsters. She visits Mullan's office and he tells her that Mary is making a film. Mary is making a film is also helping her teaching her by example to enjoy simple pleasures, bringing warmth into her life. Mary's employer, Tim (Piper Laurie), who has lost his job and who is becoming increasingly unstable. But it is Mullan who tells her, "Mary, this is your chance to live. You need each other." For Mary the divorce seems at first a problem. But right problems can be solved. Mary and Tim together work out their solution.

How can a man attract a star name?

I would like to see that happen. I have a couple of stories that would be suitable, but I couldn't even attempt them at the moment. I would be looking at actors' fees in the vicinity of \$5 million.

Do you think private lenders would be more inclined to lend to films starring "bankable" actors?

I could believe that you are right, but we are in the wrong end of the horse and cart. If I had a story I felt was commercially viable all around the world, and someone like Luc Besson was lined up, and we found that our credits had the money, I would certainly want to do only that more. I would want to be defined guys that I had an American distribution deal on it.

Perhaps with the right come you could...

What was really interesting about packaging a film. On the private package, I think we could attract a lot of capital here and could be sure of getting it back. In other words, we would have a turnover among 284 million people, instead of 14.

I think one of our problems here is that we are not designing the right type of film. We are not designing the type that would not only give us the cut of the cake that we should get out of Australian distribution, but also the type of production that is attractive to the distributor-exhibitor in the USA. This, however, raises the question should we go in for deigning our packages to satisfy the American market?

When you first read "Tim,"

what were the ingredients that led you to believe it had international appeal?

There were a number of reasons. I think there was a lot of sympathy, when family people in the world — someone without being aware of it — who in their fantasizing would desire to meet someone and live sincerely with them.

There is also another important theme: the possibility of a relationship between an older woman and a younger man. This is seen in certain relationships in the USA, and I represented it here through people I knew who have had very satisfactory — also unsatisfactory — relationships of this nature.

Another compelling aspect was the mother-son or sister-child relationship which is very strong in everybody. The film proceeds on a non-verbal basis for quite some time and actually one of the powers in the story is that this woman has formed a relationship with this boy almost accidentally not looking for it, and never dreaming that she would become involved with him. All at a sudden she finds herself sexually attracted to him and she wants to love him.

It's an intellectual, cerebral emotional type of film. If anyone goes through two packets of Kleenex, I will be happy to give them a third.

"Tim" marks your debut as a feature film director. Is it a desire you have harbored for a long time — to direct, as well as write and produce feature films?

I suppose so. Although I was in it here in Australia many, many years ago. I remember at one stage when I was working on Charles Chazelle's *Sons of Matthew*, we had to come back to the studio in Sydney, and Carl Kassar and I

were left to shoot a number of pick-up scenes, and even direct a couple of sequences. At the time I was also directing in the theatre and on radio.

Then I went to the USA, and was a performer across there for many years. Later, I wrote some screenplays, and just before I came down here I re-edited and re-dubbed a film for MGM. I certainly would have liked to have been in direction before that.

Once here, I worked with the networks, with Channels 7, 9 and 10. I directed an incredible amount of stuff on film during this period.

I would have liked to have directed *The Muppet Show*, but there was some else. With Tim I felt I would like to direct, and I thought I was capable of putting it together, because I know enough about the people, the actors and the techniques to do it.

A number of people here have raised the question that directors should not produce their own films. Did you encounter any resistance to producing, directing and writing "Tim"?

I simply said that Tim wouldn't be done unless I wrote, produced and directed it. I did, however, agree with the Australian Film Commission that it would be helpful to me to have someone as an associate producer/production supervisor, and I was very happy to have Geoff Gardner aboard, because he worked with me for a short while on *The Muppet Show*. As far as I am concerned, if a person is equipped for the business world, there is no reason why he cannot be a producer, a writer and a director. If a producer does the preparation for the film properly he can easily cope with the additional role of directing the film. Naturally, in the course of running the unit — as production and in production — an associate producer is very important. He has to handle the business matters. As a director you don't want to be bothered with what's going on back in the office.

It's only during the editing stage that you start looking at the picture. It's then that the director looks to the producer to act as a boogie-board. You have to let your hands off and let them work naturally. You have to work without vanity, be able to accept an opinion and consider it, and see whether it's right.

The only time you are in danger is when you don't know. But if you know what the style of your film is going to be, and how you plan to do it, then you know your director's job better than anyone in the whole industry.

Continued on P. 402



Mel Gibson and Piper Laurie in *Tim*, a film about the relationship between an older woman and a young man.



David HEMMINGS

Directing

You made your directorial debut with "Running Scared" in 1972

Yes. I liked it, the critics liked it, but the public didn't go and see it.

Some critics at the time — *Sight and Sound* for example — complained that it was a combination of Michelangelo Antonioni and Joseph Losey.

[I don't think that's too bad, do you?] It is a very sensitive, rather cultured film, which is full of a first director's pretentiousness. I did draw very heavily from Antonioni, because I like his style of directing behind the camera. [I like utilizing the camera to tell the story, rather than utilizing the people to tell the story.]

David Hemmings began his acting career in 1957 with a small part in Joe Mendosa's "The Treasure of Woburn Abbey". But it wasn't until his role in Michelangelo Antonioni's "Blow-Up", in 1966, that he achieved wide international recognition. Since then he has appeared in more than 30 features, including "Carnegie", "The Charge of the Light Brigade", "Barbarella", "Alfred the Great", "Juggernaut" and "Blood Relatives".

Hemmings is also a successful producer and director. In 1970, he produced "Unman, Withering and Zigo", and two years later made his directorial debut with "Running Scared".

His credits also include "The Disappearance" and "Coup d'etat", as producer, and "The Fourteen" and "Just a Gigolo", as director.

Hemmings was in Australia recently to co-star in Rod Hardy's "Thirst", and also began work on "Race for the Yankee Zephyr", a \$3.5 million action-adventure film which he plans to co-produce with Antony I. Ginnane (the producer of "Thirst").

In this interview by Ross Lunsell, Hemmings talks about his career as a director and producer, and his plans for "Race for the Yankee Zephyr".

Above: Kate Narek talks to an Israeli policeman capturing a dance sequence with David Niven during the making of "Honor Among Thieves".

Afterwards, you said about "Running Scared": "I wanted to make a film set in Britain and yet not a parochially British film. I wanted to attempt at least to break out of a standard pattern of films that have come from British filmmakers. I wanted it to have a continental European flavor, because I thought it was about time we proved it was possible to make films here which didn't fall into the mould that everyone considers our films fall into."

Yes, and I still agree with that. I would say it again today, truth be told, about British films.

Fiber and Film named you as the most promising new director of 1972...

That's right. And *Colors* do

Cinema said it was the best film to come out of Britain in 30 years. The majority of the critics loved it and were very supportive. Alexander Walker in particular was very strongly in favor of the film.

But it died at the box office.

That's right. *But Running Scared* just wasn't prepared by anybody.

But it had a major distributor . . .

It had a major distributor in Paramount, but the management changed during the making of the film, and Frank Yablons took over. I am sure he would agree with me that he hated the film. He didn't think Paramount should be investing in British film at all. The actual campaign, I think, allowed for 30 posters, there was no real promotion done.

You then directed "The Fouries," which went into production a year after "Running Scared."

As a director, I was in a difficult position after making *Running Scared*. It went out, the critics liked it, but it did one-and-a-half-represents at the box office. So I couldn't immediately set up a new film of my own. I did *The Fouries* and I was pleased to be asked to direct it. It was universally loathed by the critics, but made a lot of money.

At that time I was faced with the choice of making films which I believed in, but was uncomfortable, or making films for other people which made money but which I knew I wouldn't be 100 per cent happy with. It's the eternal dichotomy of this business.

I once read a remark made by Claude Lelouch, that every 10 years he was going to make a film like *A Man and a Woman*. You dream rapid. It's the only sort of film that really makes money.

Your most recent film, "Just a Gigolo," was made in West Germany last year . . .

It's a very light film — frothy and jolly. It's about a young boy struggling to find his feet. David Bowie plays a Prussian officer who believes, because of his upbringing, that because it is duty. But he is an anarchist, there is no place for German soldiers in Berlin after the war.

Were you originally set as the director?

No, there were lots of people mooted to direct it. I was originally asked to set it. Then I did some work on the screenplay with Joshua Sinclair, and eventually I

was asked if I would direct. At that time there was virtually nobody involved, except me. We then selected Sylvia Rowe, Maria Schell and Curt Jurgens, and finally David Bowie and Kim Novak.

It was a film thought with discretion, and there was far too little pre-production. Yet, at the end of the day we got a film that I did was worthwhile. I really loved it.

However, in the editing process it was constantly changed. It was constantly reworked and looked up an attempt to appease every distributor who came along to see it. In the end, I threw up my hands in despair at the changes and said,

"Look, you have the right to produce to meet this film, and you are evidently going to do what you want with it, and not going to give me time to settle down and get my director's act together. — I think the answer is — forget it. So I quit the film."

You abandoned the project because it was trying to be all things to all men, or rather, all things to all kinds of distributors . . .

What happened on *Just a Gigolo* is something that often happens with independently-produced film — that is, there wasn't enough money left at the end of the day to be able to finish the film properly, or to sell it properly.

I believe that independent producers need money to be able to sell a film properly and not be



Robert Powell in the picture who allows his boss David Hemmings (left) to go into trouble in David Hemmings' first feature in Berlin, *Running Scared* (1972).

mashed in the final stages of production. If a producer is chasing cash and trying to sell during the post-production period, then you get the film into the distributors' hands.

It's very difficult for the director who is trying to run a film when he is told that a distributor doesn't like a scene, and the producer suggests he cut it out. And each distributor desires I like different scenes. So the film goes through all these constant changes, and nobody ever really gives a chance to live on its own.

When I quit *Just a Gigolo*, it was taken by the German producer

and, I think, pretty much by committee. It was a desperate situation.

You said when you first got to Australia that the producer's dad was "anti-Germans, pro-Nazi" . . .

Yes, that's what I considered it to be. I thought it had lost its humor, and its cynicism. Fortunately it was then taken up by Toddwick in Britain, and they

David Hemmings' first *A Gigolo* (Seating from left: Robert Powell, Trishitt Liff, Maria Schell, Curt Jurgens, David Hemmings, Rudolf Schündler, Hilde Wenzel, Johnnie Sykes Rowe and David Bowie)





David Hemmings with one of the child actors in his second feature, *The Evildoer* (1973), about a group of orphans fighting to stay together.

taked me when I thought of it and said, "I think it's terrible, and I am not going to lend it a tremendous amount of support, because I don't think it's right."

But they were absolutely smashing. They got right behind the film, spent \$25,000 to allow me to recut it, and mounted a terrific campaign. If I had had six months more—or even six weeks more—we could have got an even better result.

Does your recent version of the film work?

It's not that I don't think it works, it's just that I don't think I have ever cracked it in terms of cutting it effectively. I think it may have been a mistake, to retrospectively, to walk out on the film because I did not feel I could make any further contribution under the circumstances.

A lot of criticism has been leveled at David Bowie's performance...

I think David Bowie, in spite of what anybody may say about his performance, did the job that was asked of him by me, and if the fact lies anywhere, it lies with me. I think Marlene Dietrich also came through for me in a way that exceeded my wildest dreams, and that's a very awe-inspiring experience for a poster director. Everybody on the film did their utmost, and gave me their absolute, undying support all the way through.

If I am disappointed with *Just a Glimpse*, it is because the reaction to the film has not angled me out as being responsible, but has been leveled at other aspects, such as the acting, and the screenplay. I think firmly the director has to be faced with the fact that what appears on the screen is his responsibility.

It's all very well for me to make

excuses, but it was my responsibility to see the film through to the best conceivable circumstances. It could have been better, but it would have taken a lot more pre-production and preparation and a lot more scriptwriting before the production. It was my foolishness which allowed it to go ahead with what was effectively, for me, only five days' preparation.

I gather that was the biggest budget for a West German film since *World War 2*...

In current-day terms, yes, it was the largest film to be financed wholly by German capital.

Was it financed with German tax shelter money?

Yes, and a substantial contribution from the Berthier Fund, plus some individual finance as well.

The international film industry

Could you comment on the state of the film industry in some of the countries you have been working in recently, starting with Britain?

I think the British film industry has talked itself to death. The problem is that everybody kept on saying for so long that the British film industry was dying that, in the end, everybody believed it.

The hardest drag in Britain as to find decent screenplays. I don't know why that should be, because we do have very good people who are capable of writing fine scripts. But for some reason the projects just don't seem to go very often. And when they do, the more strength they have in their writing the less chance there seems to be of their being made.



David Hemmings directs Kim Novak, Marlene Dietrich and David Bowie in *Just a Glimpse*.

In Britain, a lot of talented people seem to be working in television...

Because television is reacting to a completely new and different direction, British television is offering a vast range of opportunities. We have, for the first time, companies like Easdale Films and others doing major television drama on film.

If you have a good story to tell, it doesn't really matter whether you show it in the cinema or on television. There may be a little bit too much nostalgia about the cinema which prevents a lot of filmmakers working in television.

What about the Italian film industry?

Italy is in such a poor shape economically that there has been a tremendous slump in production recently. No film gets financed without some kind of co-production or influx of cash from outside. Consequently there are a lot of Italian-German co-productions and English-Italian co-productions which are rarely successful.

So, on the one hand the Italian film industry has to go in for co-production, because it's the only way to survive, but on the other hand they don't seem to be able to make co-productions which are commercially successful. This is the case of the films made under the Anglo-Canadian treaty, only one or two have really made it.

Is it the same situation with France?

No, because in French they can make films for France alone, and survive. A film that is made in France can actually turn its money back there. This isn't the case in countries like Canada and Australia which need returns from

other markets.

The USA seems to be the one everyone in Australia is trying to crack...

Everybody wants to crack the USA. But in the case of Australia, I don't think you are going about it the right way. The Australian Film Commission's drive in the USA seems to be saying "This is Australia—hello!" you know, "Hi, hi, hi in it. Look what we are doing down here for ourselves."

I think that is misguided. Their approach is wrong, it's the filmmaker who should be at the forefront of the thrust, not the AFC. The film industry isn't — and shouldn't become — a *Quintus*. And if it does become a *Quintus* it will degenerate and become very staid and parochial.

Because it is government-controlled?

Yes. There are different ways for a government to support a film industry, and my belief is that the Government should support the expert side of filmmaking by offering all sorts of incentives.

The wrong thing applies to Britain and Canada. And it's the politicians between these industries which leads me to suggest that independent sources of income, such as tax leverage and co-production funding, must be explored and exploited in much as possible, provided that there is no harm and the ability to learn from the mistakes of other countries.

Germany appears to be a country where co-production and tax leverage financing is widespread...

The German film industry is very healthy at the moment because there is a great deal of money there to invest in films, and most of it does come from tax shelters.

The Race For The Yankee Zephyr

The details, so far announced, of your proposed \$3.5 million joint venture with Andrew J. Gossman — "The Race for the Yankee Zephyr" — are that it is to be written by Everett de Rubeis and directed by Richard Franklin, with three leading overseas stars

That is the plan. There are a lot of things to be sorted out with each of the parties involved before we can go ahead, but the plot is that all these people will come together.

I will take a back seat role in the venture. I will be concerned, on behalf of my potential investors, with the quality and the international marketability of the final screenplay, and also, which major international stars will be involved.

My function in the partnership is to take an Australian project overseas, raise the above-the-line costs, and at the same time sell the project. It will then be brought to Australia, and be made in Australia.

I hope to express my views about the kind of film that I and my investors would like to make. So, I will also be involved on the creative side from the early stages.

What is "Yankee Zephyr" about?

It's about a plane — a true story — that crashed with the American fleet's Christmas pay-off and the chase by various people in search of the wreck.

An action-adventure film.

It's an action-adventure-movie film. We are making some fund-

amental decisions about whether it should be an off-road or an underwater salvage film, and there are many differing views on this which have yet to be sorted out.

It's very much a mass market piece along the lines of *Passage, Gold, and Shant at the Devil*.

When Michael Filat, the South Australian Film Corporation's London-based adviser was here last year, he recommended that our objective should not be to sell Australian films per se, but to put together specifically international films. Is this what you are attempting to do?

I certainly subscribe to that view. I believe that the only way to make the market work for a minority, especially self-financing industry is to construct international films. And that means constructing international packages.

Package is a word I hate, because it suggests that you are just putting a lot of elements together to make it happen, rather than allowing the film itself to happen. But the economics of the film business are such that you can't exist on the basis of the film itself, it has to be, particularly at this kind of budget, a film with international marketability.

If the Australian film industry is to succeed and, to be frank, if any involvement in the Australian film industry is to succeed in terms of a proposed partnership between myself and Australia (Hemming), then it has to be on the basis of bringing what expertise I use to a partnership of that nature.

Obviously it's no good me coming down here and trying to tell the Australian filmmakers how to make Australian films. They do it extremely well. The only way that I could involve myself is to try and make them



David Hemming as Alfred, the orphan, who eventually discovers the identity of his father, in *The Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1962)

international by bringing an international finance and perhaps international stars.

Michael Filat's other advice was to lower standards and quadruple budgets. . .

I don't agree with lower standards. The benefits of the standards are an scheme with large budgets can be copied fairly well. The problem is that the budgets increase in direct proportion to the stars that are used. You can still make a \$400,000 film or a \$600,000 film, but it can end up costing \$4 million if the right stars are there.

Bigger budget, bigger compromise?

I don't think the larger the budget, the larger the compromise. I think the below-the-line costs are what really matter as far as the production costs on the screen count. So, if you have a budget which is too heavy at the top end — say, \$2 million above-the-line and \$1 million below — it's the way in which you spend the \$1 million which counts. You have pre-

viously paid \$1 million each for two leading stars, but you know that in a week you will recoup that cost on their names alone. That's the theory, it doesn't always work in practice.

Is the figure of \$3.5 million for "Yankee Zephyr" correct?

It's arbitrary without breaking down the final screenplay, but it takes into account most of the factors we think are likely to occur in the event we get the kind of people we need for the film.

\$1 million of that will come from the small private and government sources here. . .

That is the proposition in which we hope the investment will come.

Have you already approached the various government establishments and corporations here?

Not as far as I know, but that's not my job. I am here to try and match the financial resources that I have with those from government commissions.



From left: David Hemming, Alan Bates and Tony Beckley in *The Long Day's Journey Into Night*, directed by Peter Collinson



David Hemming as Alfred, King of Wives, in Chris Donner's *Alfred the Great* (1965)

The Structure and Size of the

Julie-James Bailey¹

In March 1976, the Research and Survey Unit of the Australian Film and Television School tried to establish the structure of the film and television industry and how many people were employed in its various sectors. The only published employment figures available were:

1. Those of the Bureau of Census and Statistics, which came from the 1971 Census.

Code	Class/Industry	Number of employees
8111	Film and television production	1810
8112	Distribution (including film and television)	807
9119	Exhibition (film)	4951
9119	Television	5086

These codes are broken down into detailed occupations (under employer, self-employed, and employee). The relevant groupings are:

- 088 Actor, director, editors, scriptwriter and film maker
- 089 Screenwriters and cameramen
- 089 Officers, proprietors, assistants, accountants and sound-recording operators.

2. Those contained in the 1976 annual report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, which states the employment figures as:

Commercial television	3840
Programming	1626
Advertising sales	1185
Engineering	1081
Australian Broadcasting Commission (radio and television)	6800
Programme including:	
Public affairs	2714
News	475
Orchestral Concerts	481
Engineering	1785
Management groups and management services	1121
Radio Australia	180
Independent production companies	1174
	11624

None of these were sufficiently detailed to give a satisfactory picture of the number of people employed in the production and non-production side of film and television. But collecting employment figures is not easy for these reasons:

- The industry has grown and changed considerably over the past five to seven years, and is continuing to change.
- There is a freelance sector, which means that the number of people employed fluctuates at any one time.
- There are a large number of small employers (production houses who employ less than seven full-time people) who often double up as freelance cover for other employers.
- The small production house sector is not very stable, because employers often set up a company for one or two productions, then dissolve it.
- The film and television industry is not research oriented. Many employers are geared to short term deadlines, and are not used to taking the long

time which research and the gathering of statistics and facts needs.

Because of these problems there is a great dearth of accurate, but very few facts, about the structure and size of the industry.

The facts were collected through telephone surveys and interviews with each sector of the industry, in each capital city, between November 1976 and November 1977. Even then, the information collected can only be used as a guide. Hopefully, however, it provides a basis on which others can build.

STRUCTURE

After some preliminary research, it was decided to break down the industry into five sectors: the ABC, commercial television, production houses (sub-divided into "major", employing seven or more full-time staff, and "minor", self-employed or employing one to

six full-time staff), freelance pool, and government-funded organisations.

The way the different sectors of the industry relate to one another, in terms of what they produce, is best shown diagrammatically (See Chart A).

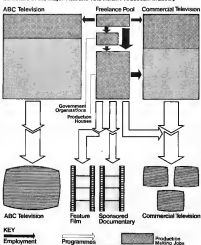
The most notable feature of this chart is how the flow of work within the industry falls into two distinct parts. The freelance pool, government-funded organisations, and production houses are inter-related — each serving the other and commercial television — while the ABC, with the exception of an occasional freelance stringer, is quite separate.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission

The ABC produces and distributes its own film and videotape programs. It seldom sub-contracts the production of Australian material

Chart A

Structure of the major Film and Television Production Industry



¹ Adapted from a paper given to the Australian Film Congress at the University of New South Wales June 22, 1976.

² Broadcasters & ABC annual report 1975/76.

Film and Television Industry

from other sections of the industry, although it does buy some feature films and documentaries. In 1977, this amounted to 49 hours, which only represented 1.9 per cent of Australian programs shown on the ABC.

The ABC's own production studios are in Sydney and Melbourne, but each produces its own news and current affairs programs, and some local programs. Figures available from the 1976-77 ABC annual report reveal that the number of programs of Australian origin totalled 2650 hours, of which 2632 were produced by the ABC. This averages at 51.1 hours a week. (The report comments in this figure is not available.)

Employment

The number of people employed in ABC television in 1977 was 2363 which was made up as follows:

ABC full-time television staff		
State	Program-making	Engineering
New South Wales	855	504
Victoria	419	17
Queensland	137	38
South Australia	131	61
Western Australia	158	43
Tasmania	124	26
Total	1822	333

Revenue

The total revenue for the ABC in 1977 was \$148.2 million, of which \$74.3 million was allocated to television. This was an increase over the previous year, but represented a smaller proportion of the overall budget by 2 per cent than in the previous year.

Commercial Television

There are 50 commercial television stations throughout the country, with three in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide, two in Perth and one in each of 34 centres. Production is organised on a network basis over three networks, with most production taking place in Sydney and Melbourne.

The individual commercial stations are responsible for their own programs. They also buy and sub-contract the production of programs from independent production houses.

The most recent figures available are from the 1976-77 Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Annual Report which states that the amount of Australian-originated programs shown by the metropolitan stations was 1986.7 hours. This averages at 38.2 hours a week for metropolitan stations. (The report comments in this figure is not available.)

Employment

The number of people employed in the capital city stations during the course of the survey appeared to be:

Commercial television full-time staff in		
City	Staff	Programming/Engineering
Sydney	1281	817
Melbourne	884	520
Brisbane	584	345
Adelaide	592	348
Perth	395	225
Winnipeg and Vancouver	135	87
All capital cities	3245	2007

Note: It appears that there is no uniform definition of programming and engineering jobs, so that figures for jobs included in these categories may not be comparable for each city.

Revenue

The total revenue earned by commercial television in 1976 (the latest available figures) was \$231.8 million, which represented an increase of 39.8 per cent on the previous year.

Production Houses

Production houses produce advertising commercials, industrial documentaries, training and educational films, feature films and series. They vary in size from one-person operations to large organisations employing between 100 and 200 full-time staff. Most production houses rely on a pool of freelance technicians.

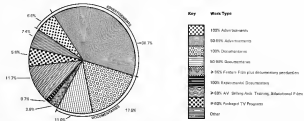
Identifying the production house sector is a difficult task. The Broadcasting and Television Year Book, a telephone survey of companies listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory in each state, together with listings kept by the Australian Film Commission and other industry organisations, were used to identify this sector.

A total of 43 major production houses (those employing seven or more full-time staff) and 162 minor production houses (one-person operators or employing up to six full-time staff) were identified. Unfortunately several firms would not cooperate in the survey, and some could not be contacted. These figures should, therefore, be used as a guide only.

The survey indicates that at least 1700 people are employed full-time in the production house sector, although it is possible that some may also have been included in the freelance sector. (The

3. These figures were provided by independent city stations between November 1976 and November 1977.

Chart B Production Houses Graphic Summary of Work Types - National Pattern



Production house full-time staff				
City	Majors	Employees	Minor	Employees
Sydney	26	749	62	181
Melbourne	14	411	62	127
Brisbane	3	26	13	31
Adelaide	—	—	18	50
Perth	—	—	10 ¹	2
Robert	—	—	—	4
Total	43	1286	162	398

¹ The major and minor production houses are combined.

production house sector depends largely on freelance personnel to crew productions on a daily basis.)

Programs

The 143 major and minor productions on business interviews were asked to indicate the type of work they produced. The breakdown shows that for more than 38 per cent of their work, 45.3 per cent were dependent on making commercials, and 27.5 per cent on documentaries. (See Chart 8, previous page.)

Revenue

Revenue for the production house sector comes from several sources, including commercial television, government funds, the film industry, and advertising agencies. The only figures available are from the advertising sector which contributed \$59.8 million worth of work in 1977.

Freelance sector

The number of freelance personnel working in the industry is difficult to establish, it was estimated through agencies and production houses. However, in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart there is a fluid inter-relationship between the small companies, so that in effect they employ each other on a contract basis. 'Moonlighting' from the ABC and commercial television stations also boosts the availability of freelance labor.

Estimated freelance pool

As closely as can be established the following table represents the size of the freelance pool.

State	Agency Service	Estimated size agency	Total
New South Wales	202	93	295
Victoria	86	6	92
Queensland	—	20	20
South Australia	55	—	55
Western Australia	—	12	12
Tasmania	—	2	2
	313	30	420

Government-funded organizations

The Commonwealth and State governments directly fund organizations to make programs, and generally subsidize film and television production. Some employ administrative staff and production personnel with film and/or video production experience.

As of March 21, 1978, government-funded organizations employed about 294 full-time staff, of which 136 were either in program-making roles, or where the experience of someone who had made programs was needed

Statistical analysis

Organization	Persons in full-time employment	Production/Technical staff
Australian Film Commission	1671	36
New Film Corporation	324	—
Victorian Film Corporation	10	—
Queensland Film Corporation	13	—
South Australian Film Corporation	58	14
Tasmanian Film Corporation	254	21
West Australian Film Council	— ¹	—
Perth Institute of Film and Television	106	5
Total	284	156

¹ Includes Film Australia.

² Employs three part-time directors and one part-time

producer. (Note: officer employed by the Queensland General

Government estimates the Queensland Film Corporation

has five full-time technical members of the staff.

³ Also employs two technical personnel on a short-term full-time basis.

⁴ Includes an executive officer on a part-time basis. There are seven honorary members of the film film Council.

⁵ The Perth Institute of Film and Television receives financial assistance from the AFC and the West Australian government to undertake production and training activities. It also employs five full-time technical personnel, staff and eight part-time staff in areas related to production and education.

Revenue

In 1977-78, \$9.7 million was appropriated to

the AFC by the Commonwealth government, of which \$3.5 million was provided for Film Australia to make and contract work to independent production houses. Funds allocated to the General Activities Branch of the AFC are invested in feature films, television productions, and provide general assistance to the industry.

Industry structure

A summary of the above statistics for the industry is shown in the table below.

FUTURE TRENDS

Traditionally the freelance and production house sector has centred on film production, supplying filmed commercials and programs to commercial television. However this balance is changing. There are now a number of videotape production houses, and the commercial television stations are making commitments on videotape, thereby reducing the number of commercials made on film by production houses. At the moment this does not appear to be creating a significant depression in employment among the freelance and production house sectors, because Film Australia is employing fewer full-time staff and more freelance staff, and the feature film industry is using freelance personnel and production houses.

However, if there is a continued growth in commercials made on videotape, particularly by the stations' full-time employees, it could mean that the traditional way in which film technicians have learned and developed their craft will not be so readily available. This could have serious effects on the future development of the film sector of the industry.

Education and community

There is also a sub-industry which services educational institutions and community groups. It includes State and Federal education departments providing production facilities for the making of programs and films specifically for educational needs: video access centres, community education centres, and the many and varied local, State and Commonwealth government units established to conduct courses and make training material publicly available and make training material publicly available and make training material publicly available. Actual employment statistics are impossible to identify, although the demand for the services of film and video units is increasing rapidly. The relationship between the sectors is indicated on Chart C.

Continued on P. 462

Industry Structure

Sector	Program-making	Engineering	Revenue (\$ million)	Available programs (hours a week)
ABC	1830	303	14.3	81.1
Commercial TV	1824	108	21.3	38.2 ¹
Production houses	1700 + 12 ²	—	N/A	N/A
Television and video production	432	—	15.1 ³	N/A

¹ Average for each week of the year.

² Figures for each week of the year.

³ \$4.7 million appropriated to the Australian Film Commission, plus \$2.4 million appropriated from state governments to state film corporations.



David Hughes

CANTRILL

Arthur and Corinne

You once said of your film "Harryhausen" that it "serves as an expression of hope in times of turmoil". After watching the film, I can not sure there is a relation between the film and the 'message' you ascribe it...

Arthur: It was something written at the time of making the film, and relates to the way we felt about being back in Australia.

Corinne: One dramatic word, happens above. I think both of us are very depressed by the society we live in. I think the end of Harryhausen is hopeful.

So, in a world of depression you bring forward a message of hope as a positive contribution...

Corinne: I see the film itself as something that gives humanity a

Arthur and Corinne Cantrill are Melbourne-based avant-garde filmmakers who have been producing experimental films since the early 1960s. In the 16 years since their first explorations into alternative film forms, they have made more than 70 films (three of them feature length).

Their films have a strong representational content, with considerable 'meaning' and 'message': concerns which involve expressions of hope, social despair, loneliness and purity. At the same time, the filmic processes which they investigate, particularly their work with color, hand-printing, and editing is innovative.

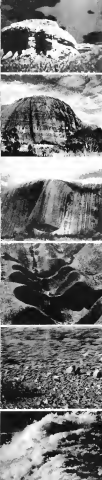
In addition to their filmmaking activities, the Cantrills have also been involved in film teaching and television documentary film production, and, since 1971, have published *Cantrill's Filmmaking*, a magazine devoted to alternative filmmaking and video production.

This interview was conducted by Sam Robdie, a lecturer in cinema studies at La Trobe University, Melbourne, and is concerned with the conjuncture in their films of process and representation, particularly as it is manifested in their landscape work.

hope. I think anything that is fantastic and wonderful is hopeful.

Arthur: But that is not to say it was the reason for making the film. In a sense, it is almost an afterthought, something that occurred to us having made the film and looked at it and thought, "Well my gosh, that is an expression of hope."

You also described "Roughly" as "liberated rapid animation evoking the life emerges at work in a serene landscape. The accompanying Aboriginal music has similar exuberant life rhythms." The film, regarded in these terms, becomes a metaphor, a sign of something else. In fact, "At Eternity" is subtitled "metaphor of death". You seem to think of your films as expressing very definite messages: hope, death, energy, despair...



Arthur: It's the extent to which we have links with romanticism, and we don't try to break that in our work. We find it possible to deal with themes that are not condemned by other avant-garde filmmakers, and at the same time use techniques that have very much to do with the processes of film: the art of photography, the art of editing, the action of light upon the film.

The common denominator of a metaphor for life or memory is light. We see no difficulty in using that as a common metaphor for what might be regarded as somewhat romantic ideas, and combining these with physical material approaches to the filmmaking question.

You speak of your films in these metaphoric terms; you also describe processes in some detail. For example, with regard to "Earth Message" you have said: "Filmmakers are created from superimposed layers of landscape, sky-scene and bath; harmony of movements between layers of superimposition. The film is structured in the camera with a minimum of editing. There is a concern for film sounds created by image, texture, color, movement and sound." Are these the forms in which you wish your films to be discussed and understood?

Arthur: I am very conscious of the difficulty of writing prescriptions for the guidance of an audience. At times I am quite worried about it, and I think I can short-cut a viewer's response and contribution to the work. Sometimes I wish we hadn't written them.

When you write about your films you function as critics or theorists. There are critical notices involved in the kind of statements you make about your films. . . .

Arthur: We may be writing material that doesn't do the films justice at all, and is just poor criticism.

What is interesting about your criticism is that it is primarily descriptive. You say: "Here is this film. It goes through these processes. You can see the processes in the film" . . .

Corrigan: When the film is shown to people for the first time I don't think anyone can possibly expect to get from it what we get from seeing it dozens of times.

Do you think there is something to get from it, a definite thing which the film is, and which, if



properly described, can be known and appreciated by an audience?

Corrigan: Why can't they know and appreciate it by seeing and listening to the film?

Arthur: I prefer to think of a number of possibilities of approaching a given film. The most we could hope for with our written introductions would be to suggest some kind of jumping-off point from which viewers may take some ideas, and also develop their own response, but hopefully, not feel that they are limited.

Do you think an audience experiences difficulties watching your films?

Arthur: We are aware of this difficulty. We have been to screenings where there have been screaming, raging demonstrations against what has happened on the screen.

We do have this almost perverse inclination to show our work as widely as possible, and sometimes we choose the audience so we won't have such difficulties. We may choose to show the work at colleges, or in certain environments where we know we can handle the situation.

Corrigan: We always feel ambivalent that our work doesn't get a wider public showing. But then when I go to a cinema which is trying to show a better type of film — such as *The Longford* in Melbourne — and I see the people there in the audience, and hear their talk, I just know that the problem isn't with our films, but with society. There is an enormous barrier between ourselves and most people.

How do you contrast that kind of problem?

Corrigan: I don't know.

Barry Hansen: the execution point and aspect of the Corrine Barry Hansen 1979, a film which includes his idea of art from the construction of sacred to artist.

Is it an historical or even political problem?

Corrigan: All I can say is, I am not going to become like them, in my lifestyle or in anything.

What does "like them" mean?

Corrigan: I am not going to become brutalized like they are. I am not going to become like that, and see our work cut down to that level.

A lot of audiences are unprepared for certain films, but there are also a lot of films that don't allow the audience to exercise an understanding. Often the audience is accused of being insensitive if they don't understand. . . .

Arthur: That's a rather arrogant position we have tried to avoid.

Why is landscape so central a concern in a large number of your films?

Corrigan: One of the things we are concerned about is to try and work towards an Australian consciousness. The Australian landscape is basic to an Australian consciousness.

But the Australian culture is urban. . . .

Corrigan: That's what we are told.

What else produces this image of the landscape but an urban culture? Nature is just nature. Australians mostly live in cities. . . .

Left from top: 1 and 2: *Earth Message*, 3 and 4: *Alfresco*, 5: *Corrine Barry*, 6: *Corrine Barry*.



Will Space in Moving Spaces (1966), which uses multiple superimpositions to create a graph of movement

and color.

Cornue: I don't think there is an urban pre-occupation.

It can't be a rural pre-occupation....

Arthur: No, it is a pre-occupation from the viewpoint of one living in the city.

It is a concern of experimental filmmakers to find the cinematic equivalents of the things they film. Objects are made beautiful, left as residues, or serve as back-grounds for other kinds of work to do with film processes. Landscape is a subject which is full of connotations such as romance, loneliness and freedom. Do you regard this as a problem?

Arthur: We seem to have two amounts of work going. There's the *Harryhausen, Skin of Your Eye*. *Balaban Spencer* referred black and white material, all very much to do with process.

Cornue: All the landscape work is to do with process, too! At *Eltham*, for example, isn't that to do with a cinematic process? *Ocean at Point Lookout* is also very much to do with cinematic process.

In landscape, there is this question of what sort of images you want to have in your head. And one of the things we went to get into more and more people's heads in landscape, so that they can perhaps be more aware of it, or think about it.

What do you want them to think about the landscape?

Cornue: I don't know I would like them to think about something other than major cars

You want the audience to think about the landscape, but you also want them to think about the film. What relationship do you see between the film processes and the landscape?

Cornue: We have been trying to create a relationship between a cinematic process, or maybe two, depending on the film, and a particular landscape.

Arthur: And we have chosen certain techniques, or processes which very often seem to be related to that landscape. Not so much to depict the landscape as it exists out there, but to reflect our response to it at a given time. It's not as if we are attempting to reveal the landscape to make people feel good about the fact that landscape exists.

Our other landscape material is the three-color separation material, which is very process-oriented, and to that extent goes right back to what are almost still photographic images of certain aspects of the landscape.

Could you explain the color separation process?

Arthur: It's simply the process that occurs on normal color film as the one layer of emulsion. Color from a given scene is broken up by means of filters into its three components — red, green and blue. These are the three primary colors in light transmission.

We film the scene with a red filter on a strip of black and white negative film, and then, without moving the camera (it's on a tripod), we film the same scene through a green filter, and next through a blue filter. So, we have all the red, green, and blue in the scene, and when those three strips are printed together through

film on to color stock, they release the information. Combinations of these three primary colors become the complex mix of color we see in everyday life.

Having given this very precise technical description I should also point out that a lot goes on between those three exposures that doesn't occur when a strip of normal color film records color in that way.

Cornue: In the three-color separation landscapes the shots are all static. They are all set-up situations, usually running for about a minute. What's very interesting is that within that static scene landscape shot there is so much activity and movement, often of an extremely subtle nature. I imagine we were often aware of when we filmed, like the movement of very faint cloud shadows. So that within each of those static set-ups you become aware that — in which is apparently a contradiction — there is tremendous activity.

A greater awareness of external reality, or a greater awareness of the reality of the film?

Cornue: Both, I suppose. Certainly, in terms of talking about the movement of cloud shadows, there are things you may not notice when filming which are pointed up by the three-color separation process. The process also highlights the subtle richness of the film, because there are always subtle impressions of registration — which are interesting, too.

How are the color changes produced on the still-life subject in *"White, Orange, Green"*?

Arthur: We started a little piece of clear glass film into the film slot of the camera. There are basically two colors, apart from the clear white exposures — orange and green. We chose the colors and the materials we were filming because of the relationship of the materials to the monochrome effect of the orange, green and white. In other words, these are components of orange and green and white in the objects filmed.

We were intending that to be a play of color in these objects, as filmed objects with the illusion of two-dimensionality which the film brings. We were interested in how this two-dimensionality was affected by the over-laying of the monochrome, which related to some of the colors in the field. So, there are a number of considerations, and the rhythms that finally occur in the last part were arrived at through shooting and editing.

Continued on P. 600

Rayb Pines for 1 Island Film, 2 Beach, 3 At Eltham, 4 Earth Message, 5 Harryhausen, 6 Eltham.



GUIDE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FILM PRODUCER: PART 14 CENSORSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

In the 14th part of an 18-part series, *Cinema Papers* consulting editor Anthony J. Gargano, and Melbourne selectors Ian Bellie and Leah Gore discuss Australian censorship rules and requirements.

Introduction

The censorship of films, and of advertisements for films, in Australia is regulated partly by the states and territories, but, with exceptions which are discussed below, it is centrally administered.

A federal body, the Film Censorship Board, administers the film censorship requirements of the Commonwealth, and also most of those of the states and territories pursuant to authority granted to various ways. There are certain special procedures.

The approach of the states and territories is to prohibit (through exhibition of any film which is not exempt from censorship or duly approved by a censoring authority. Although the legislation contains many similar provisions, it is not uniform. There are local variations, for example, in the definitions of "theatre", "venue", and "film".

Theatrical exhibition, within the meaning of the legislation, is not confined to screenings in cinemas, but generally does not cover private screenings for which no admission charge is made. In some state acts it is unclear whether "film" includes videotape.

The states and territories have adopted a uniform classification for imported films. The relevant Commonwealth requirements for the *Cinema (Censorship) Film Regulations* force under the *Cinema Act*, and *Broadcasting and Television Act 1942-1978*.

The *Cinema (Censorship) Film Regulations* relate to imported films and film advertising matter. The control of imports being within the Federal legal jurisdiction under section 51(ii) of the Constitution.

The Broadcasting and Television Act provides for the printing of television screens in Australia (film being within the Federal legal jurisdiction under section 51(v) of the Constitution as interpreted by the High Court). For the purpose of such licensing, television program standards have been published pursuant to the Act. Certain kinds of film are required to be censored and classified according to these standards, before being televised by a licensee. The censorship classifications of films for television differ from those adopted by the states and territories.

The Act does not regulate the use of television sets or video equipment as such, nor does it provide directly for the establishment of cable television systems, although any community television system has to be licensed. Another Federal act, however, the *Telecommunications Act 1975-1976*, makes it an offence to install television cables across property boundaries without proper author-

isation.

A closed-circuit television system within the boundaries of a state property (eg. a guest house), and not involving a community antenna, would not require Federal authorisation. An Australian-made film shown on such a system would not have to be censored pursuant to any Commonwealth legislation but such a showing might fall within the relevant state or territory legislation.

While the legislative framework of film censorship in Australia is uniform, in practice the system operates without emphasis on line legislation. There are, for instance, a few exceptions to the prohibitions adopted by the Film Censorship Board when censoring on behalf of the states. They have gone uncorrected, no doubt because of bureaucratic inertia, and because applicants for censorship are quite interested in the process itself than in the forms used to achieve them.

There are some prohibitions in the legislation, e.g. against publishing a forthcoming film before it is censored, which are unenforced to enforce strictly, and which are, therefore, frequently breached without prosecution. Some differences in the censorship classifications as to similar films, and in the readiness of the authorities to police the legislation, are difficult to explain. It seems film censorship is one legal area in which politics and personalities may play at least as important a part as the letter of the law.

The Film Censorship Board

As a result of the provisions and arrangements referred to above, the main censorship authority for films in Australia is a Federal one, the Film Censorship Board, set up under the *Cinema (Censorship) Film Regulations*. The nine-member Board has its offices in Sydney, and its functions include:

- (a) viewing, and either rejecting or registering, all films and videotapes imported into Australia;
- (b) viewing, and either rejecting or classifying, all films (other than exempted films) intended for cinema exhibition, or for such other kinds of exhibition in Australia as are controlled by state and territory legislation;
- (c) viewing and classifying all films for Australian television other than:
 - (i) films produced in Australia by an Australian television station, or by an independent producer under contract to an Australian television station, and
 - (ii) television commercials;
- (d) examining, passing or rejecting all imported posters, photographs, and other advertising matter intended for use in conjunction with the exhibition of a film, and such locally-produced advertising matter for films in the censor requires to be submitted.

The Board is prepared to discuss informally such matters as the likely classification of a proposed film of made in accordance with a submitted script, but no formal decision can be made until the film is viewed.

Anyone aggrieved by the Board's decision on a non-television matter can appeal to the Films Board of Review, a five-member body, which meets when an appeal is lodged. The only higher appeal is direct to the Federal Attorney-General. Anyone aggrieved by the Board's decision on a film for television may appeal to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal.

The workings of the Board were explained in an article in the January 1977 issue of *Cinema Papers* by the then Deputy Chief Censor, Janet Strickland. According to Ms Strickland, the Board does not act itself primarily as having a suppressive or repressive function, nor does its functions include the enforcement of its decisions. Enforcement is a matter for federal, state, and territory police authorities.

Information about the Board's classifications of films for cinema release, repackage (giving the basic reasons), and cuts made in films submitted for consideration, is published in the *Commonwealth Government Gazette*, and is repeated by permission in *Cinema Papers*.

Rejection of Films by the Film Censorship Board

Regulation 13 of the *Cinema (Censorship) Film Regulations* requires the Board to reject any imported film which, in the opinion of the Censor is:

- (a) indecent, obscene or blasphemous;
- (b) injurious to morality, or encourages or incites to crime;
- (c) offensive to a friendly nation or to the people of a part of the Queen's dominions, or which
- (d) denotes any matter which is undesirable in the public interest.

The five states, whose film censorship is administered by the Board, specify similar grounds for rejection, but with some variations. There are also slight differences in the grounds for rejection between the states. Thus, all refer to films denoting matter which, in the Censor's opinion, is of an indecent or obscene nature, but Western and Tasmania also refer to matter of a disgusting nature.

No state mentions blasphemous matter, or matter offensive to a friendly nation. All states, however, refer to matter which, in the Censor's opinion, is likely to encourage or incite crime. Western Australia and Queensland also refer to matter likely to encourage "public disorder". Matter which is "injurious to morality" and "undesirable in the public interest" is mentioned in the New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland acts, but not in Victorian or Tasmanian acts.

New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland specify that the Censor's opinion on these matters is to be formed after having regard to the manner in which the film would be classified if it is not rejected. This allows for the possibility of a restricted classification.

All five states direct that, notwithstanding these grounds for rejection, the Censor shall not reject, and must classify, a film which "(in the Censor's opinion)" in Western Australia and Queensland:

- (a) "in good faith and with artistic merit"
- (b) "represents any scriptural, historical, traditional, mythical or legendary story"

There is no such provision in the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations.

In practice, the differences in the grounds for rejection and between the states, and between their requirements and those of the Federal regulations, are of little consequence. The Film Censorship Board apparently takes an overall view of the criteria for rejecting or rejecting a film.

In his article in *Cinema Papers*, Janet Strickland had this to say about the Board's rejection of films:

"Most films currently rejected — and that was about three per cent in 1975 — are those found under 13(A) as being 'indecent'.





Acceptable supporting purpose or theme, not redemptive features of social, literary, or artistic merit."

"When we talk about obscene violence we think of such violence as being totally gratuitous, related, direct, open, and portrayed for its own sake — for example where the audience are invited to 'groove' or 'bloody, disgusting close-ups, and sadistic re-enactments' scenes."

"The Film Censorship Board does, in a way, share a degree of conservatism and qualitative control over film. Queensland central in the sense that three per cent of films were rejected and 25 per cent were restricted (1975), qualitative control in as much as the overwhelming majority of those rejected were totally without redemptive social purpose or merit."

Censorship Classification of Films for Non-Television Release

The basic idea behind the system of classification film (which have not been rejected) is to reform the public of the nature of a film. All states and territories have adopted four classifications:

Classification	Symbol	Comments ¹
General Exhibition		For all ages. Family entertainment. There are not necessarily children in films, but films that do not contain material that might disturb children or upset their parents.
Not Recommended for Children		12 For films which do not qualify for "G" because of something in the plot, theme or treatment. There may be some violence, less than such language. Adult viewers (16 and over) should avoid areas in a fairly mild context.
Mature Audiences		For 16 years and over. For films that deal essentially with adult concepts but that have no more obscenity than "R" indicates. The film may contain sexual relationships, brutalization and violence, but it may contain crude language and may depict violence — but the treatment differs from "R" films in the degree of explicitness and overtones.
Restricted		Suitable only for people of 18 years and over. For films that deal with themes in an overtly explicit way. The treatment shows a greater exploitation of sex and violence, confined to 18 years old to 18 years and over to some sections of the community.

1. Quote by Janet Strickland in her article in *Cinema Papers*, January 1977.

The Meaning of "Film"

In the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations, film means "a cinematograph film or a videotape and includes a positive or a negative or a cinematograph film."

The definition of film is different in each state and territory, and the question arises whether the ownership requirements of the states and territories apply not only to film but also to a series of photographs for projection onto the screen, but also to videotape and other forms of inflexible storage from which moving pictures can be imprinted electronically.

In Tasmania, film means only "film for use in a cinematograph" (which is not specially defined), so videotape is clearly not covered. (The Oxford dictionary defines a cinematograph as an apparatus producing pictures of motion by the rapid projection on a screen of a great number of photographs taken successively on a long film.)

In the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, film means "a roll or tape containing successive images produced by photographic means and capable of being exhibited by means of a cinematograph." An cinematograph is not given any special meaning, it merely videotape is not covered in the territories, despite their mention of tape.

On the other hand, the Victorian and New South Wales provisions appear to cover videotape. Various regulations the exhibition of a "picture", defined as "a visual image exhibited in symbols of being exhibited from a film", and provides that film "includes any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is a record capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture". New South Wales amended its legislation in 1971 to mention videotape. It now defines film as film or videotape used, or proposed to be used, for the purpose of exhibiting a picture in either optical effect by means of a cinematograph or any other similar apparatus for the exhibition of moving pictures.

The position is less clear in South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland.

In South Australia, film is defined as "film for use in a cinematograph or any other apparatus for the exhibition of moving pictures". It could be argued that this is wide enough to cover video equipment.

In the Western Australian and Queensland legislation, film is defined as "a film exhibited or proposed to be exhibited in a picture theatre by the use of a cinematograph and any other similar apparatus and reproducing equipment to produce a moving picture or other optical effect". In the Queensland Film Review Act 1974, the definition of film is the same, except that each "and" is changed to "or".

The question arises whether the words "any other similar apparatus and reproducing equipment" are wide enough to cover video equipment without expressly mentioning it. It may be argued that video equipment is not similar to a cinematograph, and that the electronic generation of moving pictures on a video screen is not "reproducing" them, since the pictures do not exist until produced on the screen. Some hotels in Queensland are believed to have relied on such arguments to show, on hotel video screens, "R" films based under the Film Review Act 1974.

The videotape question will become crucial if there is a move by Australian exhibitors to set up videotexture theatres, as attempted overseas.

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or obscene". This may be applied to either sex or violence. Films have occasionally been rejected under 13(A) as being "not in the public interest" — such as those dealing in drug abuse, junking etc. The difficulties in defining what is obscene or obscene is revealed in the court cases in the USA and Britain. In Australia, we fall back on the "current community standards" test, and say that something is obscene if it is grossly offensive to most sections of the community. We believe that hard-core pornography would be equated with obscenity in most people's minds.

"The first most commonly rejected are those which, in the opinion of the Board, are pornographic or feature obscene violence."

"Our working definition of pornography is, 'Verbal or pictorial material devoted overwhelmingly to the explicit depiction of sexual activities in gross detail, with neither

The classification for a film is required to be indicated at all advertising material. The "R" classification is the only one that places legally enforceable restrictions on the exhibition of a film (excluding children over the age of two years or under the age of 18 years), the other classifications are merely advisory.

According to Ms Strickland, room and content are taken into account by the Film Censorship Board when deciding a classification.

Film trailers are treated as films in their own right, and must be submitted for classification (for non-television exhibition) as the film they advertise.

In 1975, 46 per cent of films examined by the Board for non-television release received a "G", 21 per cent an "MNC", 25 per cent an "M", 21 per cent an "R", and three per cent were rejected. The remainder were identified below to some special condition — e.g. only allowed for screening at a festival.

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PRODUCTION REPORT

MAD MAX

"Mad Max" is a Gothic horror story set in the near future. Urban society is in terminal decay, and the inter-city highways have become white-lined nightmares, forming an arena for a strange apocalyptic death game between nomad motor-cycle gangs and an elite group of young police officers driving souped-up pursuit vehicles.

"Mad Max" was produced by Byron Kennedy and directed by George Miller. It was shot during 1978 and is now in release in Melbourne.



BYRON KENNEDY

PRODUCER

As a young producer, not having made a feature film before, what difficulties did you face in setting up "Mad Max"?

When we first conceived the project we took it to Hindstons, and Griffiths Burke, the managing director, liked it and wanted to invest in it. We thought, at the time, we wouldn't be able to get any government money because Australian producers were making art films, and the corporations and commissions seemed to endorse them wholeheartedly. The only way to get going was to raise private money. At the stage I didn't know much about the business community, I didn't know who would invest in films and who wouldn't.

We started by examining the more conventional areas of financing, and found that these people didn't have any money, particularly to put into films. They didn't have any risk money, or funny money as they call it. We needed a syndicate, but we couldn't get four or five people to put in the money, particularly because we didn't have a track record. So, we decided to spread the risk among a lot of different people. We designed a 40-page presentation, and it was circulated, discreetly, among various people.

When we made a breakthrough with one of them — and that actually came after reading the presentation, meeting us, talking about track record and what we had done in the past — we found that he would then circulate it among his friends, and if one was in, they would all be in. That was basically the way it was done.

As far as track records were concerned they were not too worried that we hadn't done a feature film before. They were impressed with the presentation, and they said "Okay, if people are capable of producing something like this, then we might as well go into what they are doing, because they obviously seem to be on target."

They were not interested in reading the script, nor did they want to see more than a one-page synopsis. At first most the audience read just the northern Sydney circulation film. You couldn't enter the film's virtues on one piece of paper.

I found that this people who put money into films were not so concerned about what their money is going into, in terms of what the film is about. They are more con-

In 1969, Byron Kennedy produced and directed his first major film, "Hobson's Bay", a documentary which was then considerable acclaim, and led to a commission to produce a series of industrial documentaries.

He then worked as a freelance cameraman and production manager, on a number of films, including Nigel Buesst's "Come Out Fighting".

In 1971, Kennedy met George Miller at a film seminar and they decided to make films together. Their first production was "Violence in the Cinema Part 1", which won an Australian Film Institute award and was taken up for commercial distribution in Australia and Britain.

In 1973, Kennedy travelled to Europe, Asia and the U.S. on a Film and Television School Grant in Aid to study distribution and production. On his return he teamed with Miller and John Lumsden to make "Devil in a Evening Dress", a one-hour television special, which was sold locally and to East Germany.

Kennedy started work on "Mad Max" in 1975, and on its completion acted as associate producer for Tim Burstall's "Last of the Knucklemen".

This interview was conducted by Peter Beilly and Scott Murray, during the making of "Mad Max".



cerned about financial security, and that their money will actually get to a film production at some stage or another. Our presentation was much stronger on the financial side than on the story and aesthetics.

Was the development of the project made possible by money from the Australian Film Commission?

Mad Max is privately financed. There is probably more private

finance and up in this film than in any other in the history of the Australian film industry. There wasn't any government production funding at all. George and I funded it by doing three months of very intensive emergency radio locum work, I drove the car, while he did the doctoring. We got a lot of associates and stories for the film by visiting road accident victims who had come through traumatic experiences. In that short period we were able to earn a fair bit of money, too, to enable us to finance the writing, the pre-production and the development, which took about 14 months of intensive work.

Are you in a position to talk about the deal you were able to achieve with private investors compared with government finance? In the case of the AFC, the production company's equity seldom exceeds 30 per cent. Were you able to do better with private investors?

Yes. We had a substantially better deal with private investors than we could have got with government bodies. I believe it is equitable, and so do they. If I approached one of those investors and said, "I'll build you a Kentucky Fried Chicken store and I'll run it for the next five years and make it a viable venture if you put up the money", they would go along with a 50/50 split or if not, 75/25 in the promoter's favor.

"Mad Max" appears to be a very violent film. Was the use of explicit violence one of the ingredients that would make it commercially viable?

No, because at that stage violence was pretty dead; this was just after *Chinatown*, *Orange and Blue*, *The Killing Party*. A lot of explicitly violent films had come out and died. But *Mad Max* isn't really an explicitly violent film. There is only one shot where you actually see heavy violence inflicted on someone.

However, it has a violent feel, a violent *mise en scene*. This is created by its postwar context: there is a lot of noise, lots of cars smashing and bumping, and motor bikes crashing. This tends to give the impression that the film is violent. People may come out thinking, "Gee, it's a violent film", but really, it isn't. It's not really off-petting violence at all, it's more a sort of titillating



The inevitable fate goes, led by the Thunder, reduces a captured car to scrap metal.

violence, if you like.

If the violence is titillating, then you are obviously seeing it to provide part of the entertainment...

Yes. When you see the sort of films that have used the same kind of techniques before, and look at the frequency they have done, statistically, there is no way you can deny that violence isn't a potential commercial commodity.

Do you see "Mad Max" then as a genre film, in the style of certain German and American (international) Pictures' action-thrillers?

No, it's much more up-market than Cogan or AJP films. But it really isn't one individual story, it crosses into so many areas. You could say that it's a road movie, but you could also say that it's a horror film in the tradition of *Carrie*. It's also a war action film, a boxing film, and a cop film — it works in all these areas. *Mad Max* is a highly sophisticated B-grade film.

Violent films seem to have found popularity recently. For example, "The Fury," "The Chant of Blanche Boncompagni" and "The Money Movers" have

performed poorly to date at the box office. Does this trend worry you?

No, because *Mad Max* is very complex. There is so much more to it as an entertainment that it could be presented on live or not different levels. It is original and different. You will never see anything like it on television. In fact, I'm using anything that has been done before. We are not trying to make an American film in Australia; it's a genuine Australian film with an international theme.

I really can't predict what sort of business it will do, but I am confident that it delivers much more than any of the other films you have mentioned.

"Mad Max" is a very textured film lambasting a lot of action. Was it difficult to shoot?

We were very unlucky during the shooting. Originally we had a highly planned production, with a shooting schedule of 10 weeks — six weeks on first unit, and four weeks on the stunts and chase sequences. But on the fourth day of shooting the girl who was to be the original leading lady broke her leg in a motor accident. We couldn't find a replacement for two weeks, which meant that the whole of the early part of the film had to be rescheduled.

This led to repercussions all the way through the production. If a film has a short shoot you can usually absorb something like that, but when it's 10 weeks, you

virtually have to start your pre-production now.

Consequently we had enormous organizational problems, and went two weeks over schedule. So in fact the shooting took 12 weeks. We then reconvened three months later and spent another two weeks doing second unit shots and re-making a stunt involving a rocket-propelled car.

"Mad Max" was a first for you as a producer and for George as a director. It's also a first for a lot of other people. Why did you choose a relatively inexperienced

cast and crew?

We wanted enthusiasm. We wanted everyone who worked on the film to be behind it, and found that by using people who didn't have much film experience, particularly feature experience, that it was the case.

There were disadvantages and inefficiencies, but they were made up for by people with enthusiasm and enthusiasm. I think to put a figure on it, about 60 per cent of the crew had never worked on a feature film before, and about 20 per cent had never worked in the film industry. However we found that these people delivered to us enormously.

In casting, we didn't want anyone to be recognizable. We tried to steer away from television faces in much as possible. If an actor's face was known, we tried to change their appearance as much as possible.

You shot "Mad Max" using an anamorphic system. Was that a commercial or artistic choice?

It was primarily a commercial consideration. But we also wanted to shoot the film in the anamorphic format, because of its visual style. We knew we wanted that look of roads stretching to infinity, with scarping poles in forced perspective — very much a Nevada-type look — and this effect is best achieved anamorphically. Cars and motor cycles also came in a distorted format, and they look much better riding in packs on an anamorphic screen than they do conventionally.

As for the system we used, we decided to go with Todd-AO, which was the first time anyone had used it in Australia on a feature film. We talked to a cameraman in Sydney who had used it on feature commercials, and said it was excellent. There



Smashing *Mad Max*. Camera crew mounted on a specially built truck capable of travelling at speeds up to 200 kph. George Miller (foreground) is supervising cameraman David Taylor and assistant.

were a few problems with the different matte boxes and filters for each lens, but for resolution it is stunning. The project exists who have seen the film so far have commented on how sharp and clear it looks.

Why did you choose Todd A.O. in preference to Panavision?

Panavision would have been too expensive. We also had a lot of camera set-ups and many lens changes, so we decided to use standard Arri/Leica cameras with Todd A.O. lenses.

My feeling is that Panavision is probably an excellent system, but I don't believe the Australian film industry can afford to use it. In our case, and on *Last of the Knucklers*, we examined the possibility of shooting anamorphic Panavision, but agreed it was too expensive.

You decided not to edit "Mad Max" in 35mm, but to work with a 16mm reduction work-print. What was behind that decision?

I knew that with all the truckie shots and multiple camera set-ups we would be shooting the inside of lots of 35mm original footage, and that the post-production period would be very, very long. As we already had the 16mm editing equipment — equipped with the facility to obtain 35mm equipment in Melbourne for the time we would need it — we decided to work-print in 16mm and do all post-production in the 16 format.

What sort of saving did you make by doing this?

It was an estimate wrong, as far as the cost of work-print was concerned. However, you do lose some money for rushes because of the second run through the printer to get edge numbers on the 16mm work-print. This also puts the archive at risk, and complicates the day-matching job.

If it wasn't for Margaret Conlin, who re-matched this film, I don't know where we would be. She was given the job of matching 1700 scenes in quadruplex, from 35mm down to a 16mm reduction. So, she was virtually eye-matching. But I wouldn't do it again, if we had the money and the choice.

Tony Peterson did all the original editing, but George Miller finished it. Why was that?

Tony Peterson and George started work after production finished. They cut for about four months, but had to leave because he was involved in another film. Diabolica. George and another Melbourne freelance editor, Cliff Haples, worked on it for another



STYLING: GARY PAGE. Photo shows the last few weeks of the production recently. (Seen a lot of action.) He prepared the shots for *Mad Max*, and when he was well enough joined in the day after engineering and creating most of the spectacular crashes in the film.

three months. Then George and I did the final fine-cut before we started being sound.

"*Mad Max*" has been a long time in post-production. Since shooting finished, it's taken about 24 months to get to an answer point...

It finished in February 1978, but the second edit plus an extra stage sequence were done in May. It'd take a long time, and that's because it's probably three times more complex than the average Australian film. It has three times the number of scenes, and three times the amount of footage to choose from.

But it's not a long time when you look at it in relation to how long they spend in post-production on American films. We didn't want a film to go out that looked as if it needed more work in the cutting, or as if it should have had 10 minutes out here and 30 minutes out there, which I think is a great failing in a lot of Australian films. We wanted to polish and hone it as best we could.

We also spent a lot of time on the soundtrack — about five

months full-time — because the film is highly visual and very fast-moving, with lots of scene changes. It needed lots of sound to complement that imagery on the screen.

You decided not to mix "*Mad Max*" in a conventional way, but to use Armstrong Studios, which are primarily involved with record and advertising sound...

We knew that if we went through a conventional mix in a conventional movie studio we would be there for weeks and weeks. We knew it was going to be extremely complex because we wanted to synchronize a lot of sound — to harmonize tracks by putting them through digital time delays and Marshall Time Modulators.

We also wanted to experiment and give the soundtrack much more body — more punch! To do that we needed the facilities at Armstrong Studios, because they were not available elsewhere. We didn't want to go to Sydney to mix the film, we wanted to mix it in Melbourne.

We also knew we would need to add lots of ingredients after we

had viewed it, with all the trucks running simultaneously. That has proved to be the case, and this system enables us to put down additional sound simultaneously.

How do you hope to promote "*Mad Max*" in Australia and overseas?

What we have to do when we promote the film — and this also seems to be the opinion of the distributors who are handling it — is to go for the core audience, and let the film build from there. We believe *Mad Max* is good enough to generate word-of-mouth. The audience should, therefore, increase after the film has run a short period and the word films through the different strata of cinema-going public.

Mad Max's audience is definitely young and action-oriented. I believe we should direct the campaign specifically at them, rather than try and sell to everyone and find that by so doing we dilute the core market.

At this stage, we are not ready to move into the international market in a big way — but only because we still have to get a lot of the material together that is necessary to sell a version. Fortunately *Knucklers* are very high on the film and this is helping us overseas.

It's a film that probably has more potential in the USA than a lot of other Australian films, so we are waiting to see what sort of a reaction we get from there. If we do get a favorable reaction I think we will take a fairly slow, cautious approach in building it internationally. But if the film is not well-received by the American market, then we will just do a conventional sell, we will travel with it to the various festivals, and try and sell it quickly.

Will you use an agent to do it yourself?

We will use an agent in Europe, that's about as much as I can say at this stage. But in the major markets — Japan and the USA — I won't use an agent in the conventional sense.

Are you working on another project?

We recently got package development finance from the APC to develop six screenplays in fast draft. One is already about 80 per cent written.

On each of these films, will you be acting as producer and George as director, or are you branching out and setting up a production house?

No. George will be directing and I'll be producing those that get off the ground.

GEORGE MILLER

DIRECTOR

Where did the idea for "Mad Max" come from?

I grew up in a country town in Queensland where I saw a lot of car accidents. There was a definite sub-culture surrounding cars and violence, and I lost at least three friends in accidents, when we were teenagers. Then, when I became a doctor, I worked in the casualty department at a major hospital where I saw road accident victims every day. These were the sorts of influences that permeated, and finally presented themselves one day, as the raw material for the film.

Every year, in an entirely predictable fashion, about a thousand people die on Victorian roads. In spite of our efforts we are not able to modify those numbers significantly. The statistics are so consistent, it is as though we are operating under some inimitable law of nature. We make funny noises, but none of us really understands what's happening. The USA has its gun culture, we have our car culture.

Do you see "Mad Max" as a way to get people to examine violence as an Australian reality by stimulating debate on the subject?

Mad Max is a genre film which, basically, is mixing two genres—the car action film and the horror film. And as Stephen King, who wrote *Carrie* and *The Shining*, says, horror films are drama rehearsals for termination. Watching a horror film is like lying in bed at night, getting the feel of it, then jumping out as early as you please afterwards.

So, what we are doing in *Mad Max* is putting something on the screen for people to see and experience, which has the impact of being in a car accident.

There is a commentary in *Mad Max*, and it would be nice to establish some sort of dialogue on the subject, but I don't think any film can do so. Films operate on emotions, not on rational thought. We don't understand anything that's very primitive and atavistic in our society, we don't understand sex and violence, because they are not functions of our intellect—they are functions of our biology.

But we do know that the level of socially acceptable violent death in our society seems to be constant. The violence you see in *Mad Max* is always there in our society. The more a film like this

George Miller was at medical school at the University of NSW when he directed his first films, and won a university filmmaking competition with an untitled one-minute short.

After graduating, he met Kennedy, and in 1971 they made "Violence in the Cinema Part 1". Miller then began writing scripts for low-budget productions to be made with Kennedy, and also worked as an editor, cameraman and sound recordist on shorts, documentaries and television commercials.

In 1974, Miller teamed with Kennedy and John Lammont to make "Devil in Evening Dress", and soon after started work on "Mad Max".

This interview was conducted by Scott Murray and Peter Brilby during the final post-production stage of "Mad Max".



can do is to put us in touch with our darker emotions and help us to acknowledge their inevitability.

Do you think the audience will be repulsed by the explicit violence in the film?

The violence is not explicit. And believe people don't want to see explicit violence; they don't want to see blood on the screen. In *Mad Max*, there are only about 50 frames of explicit violence, the rest is implied. So, audiences won't go to the film to see full-frontal violence. Hopefully they will go to jump into the coffin for 90 minutes and jump out again. That's what a good horror film

should be.

Why do you want people to jump into the coffin for that 90 minutes?

Simply to confront, and maybe deny, our darkest fears. There will always be these sorts of entertainment, and I think they perform a very important function. Some people describe it as a cathartic function. I don't think we have to defend it, or apologize. The whole history of the cinema has made these sorts of experiences available to audiences, and they always will.

Modern-day violence in the

cinema is extremely realistic. And because it's so realistic, many people argue that it has a direct action on some people's behavior, particularly young people...

It's important to realize that there is a big difference between cinema and television. I am strongly against television violence. This might sound a bit hypocritical, since I am making a violent film, but I think television violence is much more dangerous. It's had much more adolescence in our society. He has used to more time watching television than he has on any other activity, but sleep. The time he has spent in cinema is almost nil.

Why do you think television violence is dangerous?

Basically because of its all-consuming presence and the need of kids to mimic. Kids see The Three Stooges beating each other and knocking a few teeth out with chairs, so they do it to their little brothers. We have all done it.

Cinema is an entirely different process, particularly now, people don't go to the cinema nearly as much as they used to. It is like his theatre now—a special event. We are not constantly exposed to it, as with television.

Although the cinematic experience is more powerful than television, and therefore more likely to be mimicked...

Some people who go to a film like *Mad Max* and see a guy run over by a truck, or do some hairy stunt in a car, are going to leave the cinema and repeat it because it impressed them. I understand this is happening in the USA, with *The Warriors*. Already two or three people have copied it in the cinema or outside. And a couple of little kids have jumped off buildings after seeing *Superman*.

We have been hearing about these incidents for a long time, probably since cinema first started. When I was a little kid, I jumped off a roof and hurt myself because I saw a film about parachuting. Kids are always mimicking. I guess it's part of growing up, it's a mechanism for learning.

But I believe those people who see a film like *The Warriors* and become violent would subject themselves out at some stage as being violent, and probably the same will apply to some who see

Mad Max. The one who really has to worry about it is the innocent victim of that violence. He is the victim of random selection. The overall amount of violence sits at a constant level, no matter what the precipitating factors.

Could you elaborate on the cathartic function which violent films perform?

It's basically a de-personification process. In our society we hide from violence and death. The first thing we do in a car accident is cover the bodies. We deny the process of dying, and perhaps it's important that we do — it's terribly morbid to go around thinking about it all the time. But the question addresses us every day.

At the concluding stages of "Mad Max," the hero goes berserk and wreaks revenge, killing a number of people in horrible ways. The way the film is constructed the audience's sympathies are with Max. So the cathartic experience in this instance revolves around a man who violently murders a number of people without getting his own comeuppance. The end of the film, therefore, in terms of people watching what they see on the screen, could be seen by some as justifying violent personal revenge...

I can understand what you are saying, and it's a difficult theme to defend. And again, I don't know if I should try to. Basically, what that last part of the film says is that we must recognize the violent nature in us, not only as individuals, but as animals that have survived by virtue of our aggression. If we were non-aggressive, and passive biological organisms, we would not exist today. We must be consciously aggressive to have evolved to this stage.

In "Mad Max," the police are actively involved in propagating violence. Max leaves the force, but later returns to extract his revenge in the guise of a policeman. Is this a comment on the role the police play in governing law and order?

Not really. Mad Max is a western. It has the same story, but instead of riding horses they are riding motor-cycles and cars. People see the western's dead, but in the end, it's become the car-action film.

In "Mad Max," the police and the bikers are just two groups of people on different sides of a game, wearing different colors. There is no real comment in the real world, today, the police function very differently.

Max is involved in very violent episodes as part of his normal



working day. But it doesn't really affect him until his best friend, a motor-cycle cop, is badly burned and dies. This experience brings up questions everything about his lifestyle. He decides it's too ugly for him, and gets away from it all. But eventually he is drawn back into it, and realizes that the only way he can express himself is violently. Which, in a way, is metaphorical.

What we are really saying is that we are all like that — this is all part of us and it's something we have no control over. And we can't rationalize it. It's something that is amplified, it's a pre-conscious or unconscious process that's going on, and we are only now starting to understand it. We have to try and understand the nature of aggression and man, and we won't do it by sitting down and being civilized at all the terrible things we do to each other. They are happening and they will happen always. We must try and understand what the process is, and how we can recognize ourselves to avoid being devastated in spite of some grotesque aberrations, like warfare, the human race is doing an excellent job of channeling aggression constructively.

The style of "Mad Max" is unlike most Australian films: there is minimal dialogue, an emphasis on fast action, a lot of camera movement, and a lot of cuts...

There are two basic types of films, the *star as actor* film, which is the camera recording performance of incidents, but making little editorial comment, and the montage film, which is all done with the camera. Mad Max is a montage film.

In a way sort of way, you always have them control over a montage film, particularly if you are dealing with inexperienced actors. If we had a tradition of powerful, strong, performance-oriented cinema, you would go there for a star as actor film, where you just record wonderful performances and magical moments that happen in acting. But, for a first feature, you go more for editing.

People have said that some of the stunts are very good. They were executed very well by Glen Papp and other stuntmen, who were quite concerned with getting good results. But most of it happened in the editing, it's a cutting film.

The stunts seem to be a very important part of the film. Were they difficult to shoot?

Stunts are good stuff. When you are a flicking hammer, it's a great pattern shots together to make them work as a whole, because it's something you must always pre-plan. If you take action like the head-on collision at the end, it's made up of about seven or eight different ingredients to give the illusion of a stunt.

A number of Terraviva gang members are publicly lined up with some machine guns.

happening. You don't make good stunts by piling a camera down to record a spectacular stunt, because you never really capture the emotion of it, you merely record an event.

Did you story-board the stunt sequences?

Yes, I think you must.

Did you story-board other parts of the film?

No, but it depends on the type of filmmaking. It would be nice to story-board a whole film. It saves a hell of a lot of time because you can see how it's going to cut together. You don't get into the editing room and try to salvage a stunt out of a lot of footage you have shot.

Most of the actors are relatively inexperienced. Did you deliberately avoid "name" actors?

If you are making a name actor — let's say you have someone whose presence is known to most of your audience — and he is in the film most of the time, then he has time to get into his character, to establish himself. The stunts being Robert Redford, or Dennis Hopper, and stars bring his film character. But if you have a face that's known — and often it can be someone in Australia who is

known from a television commercial or a television series — and he pops up very briefly in a film, people are only going to see him as that face.

A clever example of this was *Plunkie* at *Blazing Saddles*, with Garry McDonald. He was cast before Norman Macdonald became known, but by the time the film came out he was Norman Macdonald. I will never forget sitting in *Plunkie* with a big audience. Everyone was into the film, but the moment he came out, they yanked up and down and cheered "Norman!" which took the whole audience out of the film for those few moments. McDonald wasn't on the screen long enough to establish himself as anyone other than Norman Macdonald.

In *Mad Max*, we were dealing with a futuristic film. So, as a conscious premise, if it was a choice between an unknown actor who was known from a television series or a television commercial, the part would go to the unknown.

Did you experience any difficulties working with inexperienced actors?

Nothing major, although I have learned that you can't over-rehearse actors before a production begins. It's one thing we will always try to do in the future. It helps you to know your film, too, no matter how carefully you have written it.

The crew you selected to work on "Mad Max" were also relatively inexperienced. Upon what did the reason for this was because he wanted people who were enthusiastic. Is that your feeling, too?

Yes, although again we were constrained by the budget. We couldn't do anything people from all over the country.

I did have, however, that you don't pick a football team by selecting the best players from every club, put them together and expect them to play extremely well as a team. Particularly when you have people who have worked on major international productions, these are the straight out of college, and those who have worked in television.

There is also an enormous difference between someone who has worked on a crew for Crawford's television and someone who has worked for Grady's. To bring all these people together, to work as a cohesive unit, is a problem. It's not insurmountable, but I think it's something to which I'd give a lot more thought in the future.

What I am inferring about is setting down very clearly the proposal and the system of shooting. Essentially, that comes from the director. I think it's one of the major jobs of a director,

which he gets to the stage where he has a very tight crew that has developed together over a period of productive years.

Can this problem be overcome by longer pre-production?

I am sure there is no such thing as having too long a pre-production. We pre-produced this film for three months and we thought we had it down. But we lost it after six days because of an accident. It became very ad hoc. Most nights I was up until I am trying to work out what we could shoot the next day.

Did the disruptions leave any scars on the film?

Yes. When I look at *Mad Max* now I only see the bad things the good things stopped appearing as long ago. I am sure that applies to any filmmaker. I remember being very concerned when I read that George Lucas thought *Star Wars* had ruined only 25 per cent of his original vision. I was in London at the time they were shooting it, and the film from the production was terrible. Everything was broken-up. So, you know.

I believe that good films are only made by a lot of planning and care. And if you are meticulous, maybe one day you will finally get to make a film in which everything satisfies your vision.

A film is a comprehensive process. There are three basic elements to it. The first is the concept of filming, in which I include screenplay. The second is the execution of the film, which includes financing, shooting, and post-production. The third is the sell of the film. All these things are highly integrated. You can't divorce them, and if you are talking about cinema that's related to audiences, then all these things relate back to them.

When you sit and think of a film, it's the audience that determines what you make. When

you are on a set and directing a film, your responsibility, finally, is to the audience. And when you are with a distributor selling a film, you are interested only in the audience. Some people say of this attitude: "That's commercial cynical filmmaking." But it's not. It's making films to function in a society like every other sort of entertainment.

If the starting point is the audience, how do you develop an appreciation of that audience and what it wants?

First, you don't sit down and put a lot of formulas together, that's cynical filmmaking and it never works. What you have to do is to process your observations through your intuition — which is what a good actor does. A good actor watches the world, he is a voyeur, someone who pines for the world, observes and processes those experiences through his own personality.

It's the same with a filmmaker. The way you learn about film is to look at box-office results, at the technical problems of making a film, read good positions, and listen to street life. You have to get all that information and process it through your natural instinct — the creative instinct. And you must watch film queues, you can learn a lot by watching them.

Are you going to confirm your pre-conceived ideas about the audience by testing "Mad Max" before it's released?

Yes.

Are you prepared to modify it if you find that there is an adverse response?

We did pre-test the film as a rough cut, and I believe very strongly in the process, particularly if you have something like a comedy, where you can accurately measure audience

reaction. A lot of people argue against it, but I believe it helps you cut your film.

The soundtrack for "Mad Max" is very powerful. The music and the effects are highly integrated. Did you have definite ideas on the soundtrack from an early stage?

We tried to avoid too much dialogue in *Mad Max*. A film is sound and pictures not talking and pictures. And on *Mad Max* we needed a very strong soundtrack involving motorcycles, cars and explosions. Most scenes were written for the sound. I think most good screenwriters write for sound.

When you write a script you know where you want the music, and the type you need. We had a lot of pressure to use rock music, but we always thought in terms of a gothic, symphonic. Bernard Herrmann-type score.

I didn't believe that was available in Australia until I heard the score of *Patric* at Richard Franklin's place one night. I said to Richard, "That's our Bernard Herrmann score. I can't recognize it." And I turned out it was the score for *Patric*, which was recorded at Melbourne by Jean May.

When I wrote a big symphonic score for *Mad Max* — a score that was very difficult and challenging to the musicians. I understand he used some excellent musicians and he really attacked them to get the technical results — which gives the music a great sort of tension. It is a technique which was used by a lot of symphonic composers. It gives the music a strong aggressiveness, it's a superb score.

Brian is a remarkable man. I have always associated him in the past with the ABC Showband, middle-of-the-road type music. But an extraordinary person in the world could produce that sort of stuff within the budget we had, and within that time. Also, he was suffering from pneumonia at the time, running high fevers at night.

Brian is the kind of person who is going to make the industry. He is educated with his work. Working in a museum, hungry for information, determined to produce the best he possibly can.

Of the 200 or so people who had some input in *Mad Max*, maybe had a dozen or so have that quality — including to compromise. Some of them we not even credited on the film. Roger Coward and Arthur Cambridge, from the Catefilm optical department, are two of them. They refused to let things go past even Kennedy and I accepted. They are obsessed with their work. Talk to them for five minutes and you soon find out why they absolutely have going to the cinema. ★



A police patrol car impounded on wheels in *Mad Max*.



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		SYD. ¹	M.L.E.	P.T.H.	A.D.L.	B.R.L.	Total £	Rank	SYD.	M.L.E.	P.T.H.	A.D.L.	B.R.L.	Total £	Rank
Newsfront	R.G.	10/1 55,272	9/61 52,532	—	—	10 38,482	152,286	1	9/5/1 145,130	9/5/10 172,130	9/10 48,130	10 74,086	10/10 15,848	455,776	1
Money Heists	R.G.	10/1/1 55,120	1/1 2,172	—	—	—	58,292	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Gold Angry Work	R.G.	—	10 22,696	—	—	—	22,696	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Down	RTS	11/1 12,132	1/1 5,720	—	—	—	21,257	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blue-Pis	RS	—	—	—	10 10,222	—	10,222	5	10/10 38,170	10/10 41,244	—	10/1 35,742	—	192,205	2
The Workman	GUO	—	—	—	—	10 9,325	9,325	6	—	10 16,804	—	—	—	16,804	5
Mouth to Mouth	RS	—	—	—	—	10 824	824	7	10 1871	10 7190	—	—	—	9081	7
The Getting of Wisdom	RS	—	11/1 N/A	—	—	—	N/A	8	10 3004	—	—	—	—	3004	10
Patrick	FW	—	—	—	10 N/A	—	N/A	9	10 25,062	10 24,576	—	10/1 N/A	10 N/A	41,266	3
Activities Total		126,108	108,882	—	10,286	21,268	283,752		215,574	281,824	81,227	118,827	16,848	665,135	
Foreign Total ²		2,842,608	3,069,616	1,722,681	1,666,686	1,064,122	10,368,804		3,874,266	3,887,826	1,794,672	662,621	1,641,260	10,128,634	
Gross Total		2,968,716	3,178,497	1,722,681	1,676,972	1,085,418	12,637,556		4,090,174	4,110,702	1,795,900	679,448	1,658,111	10,825,374	

* Box-office grosses of individual films have been supplied by cinema operators to the Australian Film Commission.

¹ Film figure represents the total box-office gross of all prints of that film shown during the period in the area specified.

² Commonwealth territory.

³ Figures in parentheses above the gross figures represent cinema receipts. Events in the film figure represent the film's box-office gross.

Distributor: Australian Film Commission (AFC) - Australia; R.G. - General Release; RTG - General Release; RTS - General Release; RS - General Release; FW - General Release; GUO - General Release; N/A - Not Available.

10/1 - 10th January 1979; 10/10 - 10th October 1979; 10/11 - 10th November 1979; 10/12 - 10th December 1979; 10/13 - 10th January 1980; 10/14 - 10th February 1980; 10/15 - 10th March 1980; 10/16 - 10th April 1980; 10/17 - 10th May 1980; 10/18 - 10th June 1980; 10/19 - 10th July 1980; 10/20 - 10th August 1980; 10/21 - 10th September 1980; 10/22 - 10th October 1980; 10/23 - 10th November 1980; 10/24 - 10th December 1980; 10/25 - 10th January 1981; 10/26 - 10th February 1981; 10/27 - 10th March 1981; 10/28 - 10th April 1981; 10/29 - 10th May 1981; 10/30 - 10th June 1981; 10/31 - 10th July 1981; 10/32 - 10th August 1981; 10/33 - 10th September 1981; 10/34 - 10th October 1981; 10/35 - 10th November 1981; 10/36 - 10th December 1981; 10/37 - 10th January 1982; 10/38 - 10th February 1982; 10/39 - 10th March 1982; 10/40 - 10th April 1982; 10/41 - 10th May 1982; 10/42 - 10th June 1982; 10/43 - 10th July 1982; 10/44 - 10th August 1982; 10/45 - 10th September 1982; 10/46 - 10th October 1982; 10/47 - 10th November 1982; 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French Cinema in Crisis

Continued from P. 241

There is no lack of talented directors in France, but they either remain desperately wise, reasonable and prudent, to the point of losing all true creativity, or else they become believers in obscurantism, to be sought at all costs. A certain polarization has been established between "les Belouzes (G. L.)" and "le Dôme", between the impulsive populism and outrageous extravaganzas of boulevard comedy and the sterile academicism, the hermetic, sophisticated pretentiousness of the avant-garde. This has left a large body of would-be filmmakers in a vacuum as far as French films are concerned.



Yves Boisset's *Un bel homme*, both a film winner and a public failure.

CRITICS

In the struggle to find the middle path of a simple but living cinema, in a time but true, French production ought to be able to call on the assistance of the critics, but, unfortunately, too many of them fall on what should be a vital duty. Television, seeking profit for having stolen as many filmmakers, has increased the number of its programs apparently promising films — we say "apparently" because, for the most part, these programs and their critiques are largely devoid of objectives and criteria, and the film that they are extremely popular thereby adds to the overall chaos and lack of accurate information and well-reasoned judgment.

The situation is even worse with the fourth estate. There, the critics, incapable of the slightest discernment, give equal weight to promising debuts, obscure attempts and pretentious self-indulgence. Many films, acclaimed by the "experts" later told to be box-office flops (again, the example of *Préférence*, awarded the 1977 Critics' Prize for the Best French Film). Badly and inaccurately advised by press and television, the public has no idea how to evaluate its choice and ends up too often alienating.

In the 1955-56 period it was easy to see who were the great French directors, and everybody agreed on a dozen names. But today a game is proclaimed every month, or every week, yet within six months his name has been forgotten. The critics have lost their credibility, and with it their influence, nor are there wise ones to enlighten the crowd, to evaluate the potential filopos, to establish values and to put things in their true perspective.

In addition, critics seem to be dangerously imbued with an intellectual and political conformism which makes it suicidal for a director to treat certain taboo subjects for instance. Lifschutz was so cruelly misled by the press for having demythologized certain aspects of the Resistance in *Le Gai et les amoureux* that it was difficult for the public to view the film objectively.

To what extent the failure of the critics to play a helpful role has contributed to the cinema crisis, and just how much they are now in a position to solve, remains nebulous. However, one can state with a certain amount of confidence that the remedy can be brought to the situation when the critics prefer their inert defenses of French cinema as an article in *Le Figure* (May 27, 1978), which argued that if French films are judged to be of poor

quality these days, this is only a reflection of the modern era, with its lack of courage, virtue, honor and greatness, but how can one ignore the fact that some of France's brightest talents have produced some of her finest films? Wouldn't it be more aptitude to blame the mediocrity of ideas, talent and money than the present cinema?

MISCELLANEA

The reasons I have outlined above for the shrinking cinema audience seem clear enough: apathies within the industry, a misplaced belief in the concept of multi-cinema complexes, government mismanagement and basic television rivalry. The poor quality of the average French film and competition with foreign products. Unfortunately, despite all this may be, it does not represent the whole story.

A variety of subsidiary causes can be discerned, for example, the lack of studios is one the industry often complains about. After the New Wave insistence on location shooting, there is now a tendency to return to the studio, but the few permanent ones still open are completely booked.

Another cause often voiced is the excessive number of cinemas (14,000¹⁷), which results in the slow recoupment of capital and the premature termination of promising runs.

Meanwhile, the public must learn it is willing to attend cinema more regularly if the present conditions and public relations are improved. Cinema's complaints are:

- (a) Uncomfortable, smelly and badly ventilated interiors, late screens and sub-films which can only be read when you stand up.

- (b) The poor quality of projection, out-dated technical equipment, mechanical failures, breaks in the film, cracks and streaks, audible or deafening soundtracks, fuzzy images.

- (c) Slow take-up and lack of outside shelter, condemning often in a cold rain to wad, run or snow.

- (d) Failure to adhere to the publicized starting-time or to advertise changes to programs.

- (e) Excessively long intervals and annoying advertisements being switched and crunched during the screening.

When it is remembered that ticket prices

¹⁷ Some powerful ones, however, are disposed at the pace of a hot potato, particularly in the Paris and suburbs area, of 50 to 60 daily but fewer 17 are without a cinema and another 17 have only one.

have risen to an average FF 3.3 (about 78c) in 1966 to FF 18 (US \$60) for films on first release and FF 17 (US \$58) for the re-release¹⁸ every people feel they are getting a bad deal for their money. Add to the price of a ticket the cost of transport and fringe expenses, and cinema-going becomes an expensive outing, that puts even, low income families and the former Wednesday-evening and Saturday-afternoon addicts on the longer absent more than once or twice a year. The rest of the title they join the television.

Another strange and depressing phenomenon is occurring, presumably due to a lack of market research. Namely, it has been established as more occasions that more than 50 per cent of regular filmgoers are under 24 years of age, yet the number of films restricted to 18 years and over lines counting these X-rated is growing annually.

FESTIVALS

More and more people are questioning the value of festivals and asking whether they are just more high expensive publicity stunts, for which the films are subjectively and quite improperly selected. For example, is not Cannes, the most famous of them all, just an unprofitable waste of time and money, searching solely for sensationalism and succeeding merely in driving more and more prospective customers away from the cinema? The original idea, after all, was that filmgoers should be guided by the choice at Cannes, but this is now a far cry from reality, in 1977, only Boisset's *Un bel homme* managed to be a prize-winner and a public success.

REMEDIES

The situation, perhaps bleaker than ever before, needs urgent attention. Non-government and extra-industry assistance is unlikely. Indeed, the role which the Philip Morris Foundation (the largest sponsor of the cinema) has been playing for four years, particularly in the fields of public relations, promotion and distribution (of French and foreign films), seems to be beset with problems of basic similarity to those faced within the Government's own schemes. For example, the film selected in 1978 to receive the Foundation's prize (worth FF 120,000 or \$37,250), and the publicity and distribution assistance, was obviously inferior to the runner-up, even though the latter was a production of the rich Gaumont empire.¹⁹

Solutions clearly lie in the co-operation between government and industry, a fact that both sides may have realized last year. As previously mentioned, there have recently been some welcome dispositions, some positive actions, and suggestions that the path to salvation, however long and difficult, is approachable.

1978 began with the open letter in this

¹⁸ The pricing policy would have been left to those by which the public is to be guided. However, a price index of FF 10 (US \$3) to FF 16 (US \$4.50) in the Paris and suburbs area, FF 10 (US \$3) for the other Government finance on cinema films should be noted.

¹⁹ René Fery's *Les rencontres insolentes* and Roger Coggio's *On peut le dire sans se fâcher*. The first two films to receive the Foundation's prize of FF 120,000 (\$37,250), plus publicity and distribution assistance, were of exceptional and exceptional quality.

newspapers, which, as already noted, produced closer levels between television and cinema. In comparison with this latter, a newspaper was launched on cinema's home territory, with five new detectors being recruited to make short films illustrating the plight of the industry and the lack of success of the Government. Within a few weeks, these shorts were shown in 3000 cinemas throughout France.

Following this "political engagement", discussions were held between the head of Gramont, François Sédard, and Michel d'Ornano, then Minister for Culture and Environment, during which earlier plans were revised and the need to take firm and immediate measures was reiterated: the V.A.T. on early tickets must be reduced to 10 per cent; governmental assistance in relation to exports must be increased; the number of films permitted on television must be substantially reduced and the television stations must be forced to pay more for film rights.

In early March, d'Ornano announced his plans to help the cinema industry, plans which were to be spread over a two-year period. V.A.T. will be lowered on technical material and equipment (no mention of entry-tickets), the support fund will provide more money for film production, the television/cinema rivalry will be lessened by the creation of a new liaison body between the two industries, and there will be an increased commercial exclusivity period of 30 months between a film's first release and its television screening.

However, in typically French fashion, d'Ornano was then removed from the Culture portfolio, an event which may ultimately prove to be a blessing in disguise. For his successor, Jean-Philippe Lecoq, has already endorsed himself to cinema professionals by two measures in particular. At long last, the reduction of V.A.T. to 7 per cent (the Government will have to bear the difference of FF 140 million or 533 million) and the establishment of a new category of financial aid to audio-visual creation (the 1979 budget contains the same modest sum of FF 3 million or 51 million).

Even if the new Minister for Culture and Communication were to violate all his predecessor's recommendations, the mightiest of far-reaching, whether the provision of additional funds is likely to solve anything, and were he to implement them, it is doubtful whether they alone would suffice. To prevent French cinema from going the way of its counterparts in Germany (total economic disaster) and Britain (at most cases only American product in demand), only remedies will be needed in the next few years.

Some have already been mentioned in the course of this article, and consist in the correction of existing defects: a total rethinking and reorganization of the production, distribution and exhibition sectors, a reduction of the Government's economic assistance, and a more equitable and rational distribution of the "advantages" against

receipts³⁰, an increase in the number of low-budget films being made, without a consequent decline in their national and international appeal.

Other remedies lie in the over-riding domain of technical progress.³¹ For example, immediate investigations must be conducted into means by which television can be directly challenged on its own ground (Jean-Claude Bédelier³², head of the Fédération Nationale des Cinémas Français and president of Société Française de Production (S.F.P.), has some thought-provoking suggestions to make.³³ If cinema's whole concept were changed to some form of electronic transmission, enabling films to be simultaneously screened in numerous places throughout the country (as happened, for example, with the mid-1960s program which the S.F.P. successfully implemented to *Avignon* in April-May 1971), it would be able to draw the huge audience which is already watching its films on television back to the cinema's larger screen.

For conventional fiction-films, such a process would improve the quality of projection following analogic breaks (etc.) while saving audience film releases and, what, in the long run, be cheaper than traditional systems. Its greatest benefit, however, is elsewhere: the unique possibility of two-way verbal interchange, thus providing progress of a television-cum-documentary nature. Programs which should be able to comply with the demands of a modern public revealed by recent market research — to be increasingly disinterested in general knowledge and concerned for information, only partly satisfied by press, radio and television, could be turned to its advantage at the cinema.

No doubt such expensive and revolutionary innovations would be for the future. More pressing steps — and steps that, in my opinion, hold the real key to the problem — need to be taken in the field of cinema itself.

First, there is now a grave lack of commitment, with perhaps only 18 of real talent. To account for this, one has to go back 30 years to the New Wave, during which the director functioned as an all-powerful demand, allowing his inspiration to replace art, and improvements to take the place of technique and professionalism. With the last director, the result was an exceptional freshness and vigour.

Naturally, however, severe disadvantages were also felt, perhaps the most unfortunate being that, in this period when the image was over the text, the new *ex novo* over the plot, the author/spectator was suddenly found themselves without work. In the subsequent vacuum, it was hardly surprising to find such films straggling along, weighed down by feeble plots, mediocre constructions, selfishly situations, hackneyed dialogue, empty characters and general slothfulness — none of which can be replaced by virtuoso

camerawork.

This disastrous state of neglect has been duly noted and remedies are under way. The Government has committed its finance aid to writers turning scenarios (Marguerite Duras thus follows in the wake of Louis Pagnol and Jean Cocteau) and the Centre National des Lettres has combined with the S.F.P. and the O.C.C. in separate competitive schemes awarding prizes of FF 25,000 (US\$200) to each of the winners (out of the 80 projects so far submitted have been successful).

In proposing a solution to the second vital creative problem, we shall accept the view that France does have talented directors, cameramen, technicians and actors, and, at the risk of appearing repetitive, we shall return instead to questions posed earlier in relation to the quality of contemporary films being shown onto the market, an issue that has not been and the cinema itself does not deserves.

French cinema is suffering from a mental and intellectual crisis, inevitable from the moment a cinema is massan, when it no longer accepts itself as a spectacle, when it seems success (and profit), when it makes films for itself, for critics, festivals, awards, friends and fellow-directors — for everyone except viewers, where it should rightfully be addressed, where, instead of satisfying the director's, it distances them with contempt against their wishes, and plots against them and when it replaces pleasure, entertainment, enjoyment by the desire to demonstrate, denigrate, denounce, denude, or duplicit.

This dramatic attitude is not, unfortunately, restricted to the small proportion of revolutionary and avant-garde films, far, far too much of the cinema is equally guilty. To French cinema, popular has become an epithet of abuse, popular means commercial and alienating — so the epidemic of artistic and effective. Such symptoms are amongst French cinema.

Lana Vespini, appearing on Channel 171 in May 1978, was faulted in his condemnation the cinema is dying of stupidity and sterility. To be successful is to be commercial, and to be commercial is apparently shameful by dint of exalting the cinema's culture, the cinema has been killed.

The critics, who have turned in a film as well as a success, hardly fail to criticize this criticism: they become more and more (disagreeable) and art (commercial), choosing to ignore the fact that it is dictated by the whole history of cinema. The majority of great films have been the result of a meeting between creator, critic and the public.

The Italian cinema continues to make scathing judgments on Italian society, but it does so with the support, understanding, laughter and support of the audience. The same attitude prevails among the best American directors. France must be the only country in the world where artistic and public success are considered contradictory. The chief sufferers of this absurd "conspiracy" — attacked in an uncertain terms by the Marxist report — are the directors.

Indeed, it is this "conspiracy" to suggest that, if the supply of poor customers is not to dry up completely, all parties concerned with cinema, as an art and as an industry, will have to work together to establish the ingredients for a long-term, popular and quality cinema, a cinema which will satisfy the demands of aesthetics and commercialism. ■

The author wishes to express his gratitude to Agnes Baffoe for her assistance in the collection of material for this article.

30. As we have already suggested to 1970, that technical developments have indeed taken place, such as the advent of sound tracks, tape. Communication improved the cinema considerably.

31. Indeed, the S.F.P. has the kind of U.C.C. and projects of the S.F.P. about mid-1960s, the Centre National in January 1973 on the part of the book of the monthbook D.R.T.F. has presented acquainted with the idea, the Centre National has been the country's important since 1971 of FF 12 million (US\$ 3 million) on the production of television and cinema films, he will soon have to come up with some dramatic solutions, in reality, the Ministry of Culture and the President of the S.F.P. together.

32. Étienne Lecoq is a high school teacher who has been in the Ministry of Culture since 1971. He is now 12-13 — being 1979 — on 100,000 (US\$ 10,000) in the Ministry of Culture (the Centre National).

However, the 1973 means the *Cinéma des Cinéastes*, by Claude Lelouch, there is a direct appeal to the French cinema. See Jean-Marc Poirer's *Soleil sans larmes* (FF 5000 or \$1000), the latter was produced and distributed by the rich Cinéma de France.

33. Author's note: Since the completion of the article, Bédelier's speech has appeared in the newspaper *Le Monde* of 10 June 1978, and has been translated into English. He has been back in the S.F.P. Ministry, but he has not yet decided whether this joint cinema can replace the cinema film or whether, as seems likely, it will have to co-exist on a whole risk in relation to film and film-Gram production.

Guide For The Film Producer

Continued from P. 61

No doubt the states and territories will amend their censorship legislation, if necessary, to ensure that that kind of exhibition is covered.

The Meaning of Theatrical Exhibition

The type of exhibition of a film that is regulated under the film censorship legislation differs slightly in the different states and territories.

The question arises whether an unaccompanied (non-exempt) film may lawfully be shown to audiences outside public houses — e.g. in a private club, or at home live, or by video equipment installed within one building. We will not attempt to answer this question, but give attention to the relevant wording in the legislation.

In the territories, what is regulated is "the exhibition of a film to persons on payment of a charge or on presentation of a ticket or other token". In Victoria and Tasmania, what is regulated is exhibiting a film in a theatre which is defined as "any house room building garden or place where any film is exhibited to which admission is or may be procured by payment of money or by ticket or by any other means, token or consideration".

In Western Australia and Queensland, what is regulated is exhibition in any "picture theatre", which is defined in the state law as "theatre" in Victoria and Tasmania except that:

- The definition applies only when picture theatre "includes", i.e. it does not purport to state in complete causation.
- In Queensland, in 1973, "venue" was added to the list of places that might constitute a picture theatre.
- The expression "other means, token or consideration" is qualified by the addition "as the price, hire, or rent of admission".
- The definition concludes with the additional words "or where there is a subscription, collection, or donation received".

The New South Wales wording is different. What is regulated there is exhibition in "a theatre or public hall".

Theatre means "theatre constructed or used for the representation therein of any entertainment of the stage and includes any building and premises used in connection therewith".

Public hall means "room or building of a permanent character where public entertainments or public meetings are held, and includes any building and premises used in connection therewith".

Public entertainment means "entertainment to which admission may be procured by members of the public, upon payment of money or other consideration, or by a ticket, program or other device purchased for money or other consideration".

The New South Wales legislation also appears to be much narrower in its application to buildings than the legislation in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia. On the other hand, it is not confined to exhibitions for which some payment is made.

The widest wording is in the South Australian Act, which regulated exhibition in a theatre, and defines theatre as "any place whether enclosed, partly enclosed, or

unenclosed in which a film is exhibited whether admission thereto is open to members of the public or restricted to persons who are members of a club or who possess any other qualification or characteristic and whether admission is or is not procured by the payment of money or on any other condition".

Exempted Films

The Queensland and Western Australian Acts exempt from the requirements on exhibition of a film certain categories, namely, "any film portraying solely scenes of a topical event which has happened in Australia while being exhibited in a picture theatre at any time not later than 14 days after the happening of such event".

These states also exempt "any film, other than a motion picture, used solely for advertising purposes" unless the Censor has decided that such film is subliminal to him for approval.

Apart from these statutory exemptions, all the state acts provide for particular films, or classes of films, to be exempted from the censorship requirements by some specified administrative action or regulation — e.g. proclamation by the state governor, or direction by the Censor.

These exemption powers have been used mainly to allow unaccompanied film to be shown at film festivals.

The Films Board of Review in Queensland

In May 1974, Queensland set up a statutory Films Board of Review with power to prohibit the distribution in Queensland of a film regarded as objectionable, notwithstanding its acceptance and classification by the Federal Film Censorship Board.

The Board consists of five members appointed by the State Governor in Council, and as members include the Commissioner and seven of film personally, and any particular film referred to it by the Minister, with the object of prohibiting the distribution in the state of "objectionable" films. There is provision for appeal by an aggrieved person to the State Supreme Court.

In deciding whether a film is objectionable, the Board is required by section 16 of the Film Review Act to have regard to:

- (a) the nature of the film generally and in particular whether it:
 - (i) unduly emphasises matters of sex, horror, terror, crime, cruelty or violence,
 - (ii) is blasphemous, indecent, obscene or likely to be injurious to morality,
 - (iii) is likely to encourage depravity, public disorder or the commission of any indictable offence,
 - (iv) generally outrages public opinion.
- (b) the persons, classes of persons and age groups to or amongst whom the film is intended or is likely to be exhibited,
- (c) the tendency of the film to deprive or corrupt the persons, classes of persons or age groups or any of them referred to in paragraph (b), notwithstanding that other persons or classes of persons or persons in other age groups may not be similarly affected thereby,
- (d) the circumstances in which the film is exhibited or is intended to be exhibited in

the state, the scientific or artistic merit or importance of the film, to the extent that a film shall not be determined an objectionable film unless, having regard to the matters specified in this section and all other relevant considerations, the Board is of the opinion that the exhibition of the film in the state would have an approval or motivational tendency or effect.

Subject to section 18, section 9 provides that the Board may designate a film to be objectionable if, in the Board's opinion, it contains subliminal material:

- (a) that is of an indecent nature or suggests indecency,
- (b) that portrays, describes or suggests acts or situations of a violent, horrific, criminal or criminal nature.

The Act introduces criteria much wider than in any previous film censorship legislation in Australia — e.g. the notion of "generally outraging public opinion", "having an approval or motivational tendency or effect", and merely "suggesting acts of an immoral nature".

Up to December 1978, the Board's activities resulted in more than 180 films, which the Federal authority had passed as "R", and one classified "M" (Parental Baby), being banned from cinema in Queensland.

Other State Powers to Prohibit or Classify Films

In Queensland, the Censorship of Films Act has always provided for an appeal to the Minister (the State Minister of Culture, Parks and Recreation) by anyone aggrieved by a decision of the Censor. The procedure, which is in addition to the normal system of appeal from the Film Censorship Board, could be used to reclassify a film for Queensland.

The passing of the Films Review Act has, however, provided a simpler way for the Queensland authorities to override the federal board's classification of a film in a case where they regard the film as objectionable.

The South Australian legislation empowers the Minister (the State Premier) to classify a film for the State, and — by declaration published in the State Gazette — to substitute the Minister's classification for any classification of the film under a corresponding law promulgated under the legislation. The Act requires the Minister, in exercising these powers, to "have regard to standards of morality, decency and propriety that are generally accepted by reasonable adult persons in this State".

This happened in 1977 with Michael Thornhill's *F.J. Holden*, which although on appeal classified "M" by the Federal authority was still classified "R" by the Minister in South Australia.

As a result of complaints about the showing of "R" certificates (in drawings with screen violence) from outside South Australia, amended legislation in 1973 gave ministerial power to prohibit screenings in such circumstances.

In 1976, Western Australia amended its legislation to give the Minister (the Chief Secretary) power to substitute a classification given to a film by the Film Censorship Board, and either to substitute his own classification or to leave the film unclassified (in which case it is to be recorded as having been rejected by the Censor). Up to December 1978, this power has not been exercised.

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like to thank Bob and Wyn Davies for their
enthusiasm in producing this
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Arthur and Corinne Castell
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"Harry Houston" has a very clear
documentary impulse, but at the
same time is very concerned with
its own filmic processes ...

Arthur: We were extremely
and enthusiastically involved with
the process of the film.
Documentary aspects which occur
early as to appear later in the film,
it is a totally reworked
reformer. The film is very much a
hands-on film, and has a hands-on
material feel about it. We
saw and used a laboratory
printer and even a camera
towards the end, and hand-printed
lengths of film onto filmstock in
the darkness.

Corinne: Thorough staining
a purity of color we would never
have achieved just by filming.
When you use pure light directly
into the filmstock, you get a
quality and a purity of color you
don't get when light passes
through the camera. And that's
one of the very interesting things
about the hand-printing in *Harry
Houston*.

Arthur: We thought of pure
color in terms of light vibrations,
or wavelengths transferred with
by optical systems as far as
possible. The light was striking

directly onto the film, and this
was the important for us to work
through at the time.

Corinne: One thing should be
said about *Harry Houston*
immediately it is a tour de force
of editing. If the time we came to
the end of that period we moved
right away from editing. Having
done so much there was almost
nothing more to say.

In *Harry Houston*, most of the
film has tiny snippets of pure
color, two or three frames which
redefine the images that follow.
It's such an incredible effort to
redesign the color of images by
these subliminal two and three
frame images of pure color.

One of the things we were very
interested in at the time we made
Baudouin was simple frame
animation. A lot of our work, like
4000 Frames, was made about
this time. We were very interested
in the single-frame animation of
the real world, not just art-work.
In *Baudouin*, that is a conscious
reconstruction of animation with
film. Normally a burst of
animation will seem like a shock
in a live film, a visual event, but in
this film the whole thing is turned
around, and the small pieces of
live film are like shocks in a
stream of animated images.

Arthur: Some images. That is
the aspect that was aimed at.
A film a stream of sparkling
images, a static tempo of only half

a second duration was a great
surprise — a kind of optical shock.
The opposite is generally the case:
a few frames of action are usually
inserted in a static sequence to
create the kind of effect.

The contrast between *Earth
Messages* and *Baudouin* is that there
isn't any hand-printing editing in
Earth Messages at all. We started
to edit it after we shot it, and
found we were editing it. So we
replaced the shots in the order in
which they had been taken.

It is a highly structured film ...

Arthur: It was structured in the
camera.

Corinne: In *Earth Messages* the
superimpositions were planned. We
would know what we were
superimposing on what, whether
it was light or dark, the color of
shots, or movement. You might
have a very dark ground that was
handy to use in the super-
imposition, but it was there. All
these things were thought about
very carefully — the combination
of movements and the color of
them — so that it wasn't random.

We have done other super-
imposed work that was random.
There is a lot of random super-
imposition in *Harry Houston*.

Arthur: I think we were inspired
by the structure in music.
Sometimes the two super-
impositions are like a duet. There

is one superimposition which is
slow and flowing, and forms a
kind of background line, while
there is another which is
providing the rhythm in the
foreground. That we added music to
the track which brought in a
third element.

In *Baudouin*, I see the film is a
kind of musical composition for
music and images.

How do you relate your work to
avant-garde filmmaking
artistic and in Australia?

Corinne: I want to say very
clearly, that I don't want to be
looking over my shoulder at
what is going on in New York and
saying, "Do we fit? And we are the
main thing!" We want to do
what we want to do, and I think it
does when everyone is worried
about whether they are out in
front.

But like it or not, whatever you
do fits in some place ...

Corinne: I am not worried about
that.

Nevertheless, there is that place,
and you fit into it ...

Arthur: And people will come
to the film with that context in
mind.

Conclusion P. 402

Michael Patz

Continued from P. 249

Perhaps a writer-producer-director can do three become a little less close to the film — very attached to certain things in the film, because he/she has not only written them, but also directed them. Who is your house-board in a situation like this?

As far as I am concerned, as this film shows, there were three key people working: a writer, a producer and a director. Oddly enough they had the same name.

I looked at the script I was going to direct either as a director or as a producer — whatever category it fell into. I can work on multiple levels like this because I don't have any worry about the script if I get into a situation, as a director, where someone tells me it won't work. I say, "Talk to me, show me. Let me think about that. You are right. Let's do it that way." That was evidenced all through the production of *Tim*.

As a producer, I am not depressed. When I came to cutting the film, David Stevens, the editor, frightened me as an alter ego producer. I didn't feel there and tell him as a producer, what to do. It was a creative team. But as producer the final decisions had to be made by me.

What are your plans for marketing "Tim" overseas?

We will be taking it to Cannes, we have been asked to send a print to France to be considered for the Director's Fortnight. As well, a number of people in the USA, involved in the theatrical and television arena, are seriously wanting it and I have had offers from several European sources. It's already been pre-sold in Germany to Joana Films. I have also had an offer from Norway for Scandinavia.

Are you marketing it yourself, or in conjunction with the NSW Film Corporation?

No, not with the NSW Film Corporation. I am marketing it in certain non-exclusive areas in conjunction with Laurence Jewell. In fact only yesterday we had an offer to distribute it in Belgium.

Will you release simultaneously in Sydney and Melbourne, or treat them separately?

The original idea for *Tim* was to treat it out in Sydney and Melbourne, first and other states later. We got *The Mango Tree* into Sydney and Melbourne simultaneously, and then into Brisbane. But that was only at my insistence.



Tim (Mel Gibson) doesn't let (photoplay with Mel Gibson) with his sister (Gibson) (Gibson) in a scene from *Tim*.

to get it out before Christmas.

I am in two minds about it now though. If you are only going to put out right pretty on it, why not take advantage of all the media possibilities. If, say, Colleen McCullough was out here to help promote the film, she would get up press all around Australia. So, if the film is showing in all the capital cities and several other centres you can capitalize on the publicity. But if you release it by city, you run the danger of the film being forgotten between releases. Australia is such a small country that you should be able to take advantage of word-of-mouth and co-related publicity.

One objection which is often raised by distributors is that you can't be at two places at the same time. This is true, but it is possible to stagger the releases and open in all cities within a week.

THE MANGO TREE

Has "The Mango Tree" been a financial success?

Not to date. As of May last year — having opened in December, 1977 — it had grossed \$355,130. That didn't count any of the country areas it had been to progressively through the year. Although there is now great reluctance to show box-office grosses on screens, I would estimate that *The Mango Tree* has done well over \$900,000 as far as it can calculate.

We have paid off our expenses, savings, and various other costs, and are now returning money to our investors.

Although "The Mango Tree" met with only limited success during its city release, it seems to have grown legs in subsequent releases?

You are right. We have always felt that it had legs. You know, people can get depressed by the publicity for an Australian film. They read a few items and often get

put off. Then when it comes around a second time they see it. They flip out as because it is an Australian film, or they want to see Geraldine Fitzgerald or Robert Hapman or because my name is associated with it.

In one suburban cinema in Melbourne, *The Mango Tree* was booked with *Raw Deal*, and did fantastic business. I think it was because two Australian films were on, both of them reasonable to look at, and with recognizable people in them, including Gerald Kennedy, Gail Merano and Christopher (Pat) Pearce was probably saying, "Gee, I didn't see either of those. I'll go along and see them." For the price of \$3.50 they saw two features. I think we should think of returning a lot of our Australian films.

The success of "The Mango Tree" and "Raw Deal" in this instance may also prove that people aren't able to watch suburbs, as is often thought.

I agree, because if you live in Parramatta and there is a film showing in town, by the time you come in, pay for your two tickets, park, maybe have a couple of drinks, you are down \$20 at least. But if it's showing in your local cinema without all that advertising garbage that goes on with it, but is backed with another film that you haven't seen, you can go there at 7pm and be out by 10.30 p.m. or 11 p.m.

How has "The Mango Tree" fared overseas?

To date, overseas sales have been meagre. We have made a deal with Cineplex in Belgium and been offered a deal for South Africa, which we are investigating. We have also been offered a deal for France and French Canada.

Initially, we had an enormous response from a number of people, including Avco-Embassy and Warner Cable in the USA, but nothing came of it.

I felt that although *The Mango Tree* had considerable merit, our

primary consideration had been to make a film for the Australian market. I signed a contract which said I would give it to an Australian distributor in 105 minutes. They are looking for that length of program. I know only too well, however, that I can't sell a film for television in the USA that goes over 90 minutes.

I decided we needed to re-cut *The Mango Tree* for the USA, because there were certain things in the film from a point of view, as a producer and as a writer, and possibly from Kevin Dobson's point of view as director. We didn't get the utmost out of the film at the time we were cutting it together. It was flawed. It didn't have the momentum or the dramaticity it should have had.

In the USA, I showed it to Geraldine Fitzgerald and others, and asked them to note which part of the film they thought wouldn't hold the attention of American audiences. Based on their comments, a wholesale of the film was then shot by the best New York scene editor.

Back in Australia my dubbing editor, Bob Cogger, Christopher (Pat) and I started re-cut of the film. The new version will be around 95 minutes and is a 100 per cent improvement on the original. We haven't already set the dates for the re-release, and I believe have a print ready for Cannes this year.

I would like to make two versions of *Tim*. I don't have the time at the moment, but I am going to strike the first version and it maybe 300 ft. Then I will do a re-cut version cutting it down to 90 minutes.

What changes have you made in the American version of "The Mango Tree"?

It's much closer, tighter, and a more intimate idea about the grandmother and the boy.

We had a problem with that story to start with. It's episodic and I found that at the end and our tempo was getting slightly stronger. So we put back a number of tiny little things that gave warmth to the scenes.

Is it tempting for Australian producers, such as yourself, to go directly to television in the USA to get a large outright sale, rather than take chances on a theatrical release?

There are two sides to that. I believe feature films are made primarily to go into the cinema. If you want to release an television, your film should be tailored for that medium.

A television sale is very healthy, with the prices that are being offered by networks. I've been in the USA, but I think we need to design product specifically for that market. *

Film and Television Industry

Continued from P. 255

1. Educational production facilities

This sector of the sub-industry provides facilities which service educational needs in each state. Information provided by telephoning various organisations in early 1978 gives a guide to trends in employment in educational organisations.

Organisation	Total employee posts	Production staff
New South Wales		
Teaching Resource Centre	68	13
Victoria		
Victorian Audio Visual Education Centre	129	24
Queensland		
Commonwealth Film Centre	48	40
South Australia		
Department of Further Education		
Education Technology Centre	70	26
Flinders Television Centre	4	—
Wiley Wally Multi-Media Centre	60	31
Western Australia		
Western Australia Audio Visual Education Centre	73	21
ACT		
Australian Capital Territory		
Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra	42	25
TOTAL	485	179

2. Media education

There is no complete list of media courses in tertiary institutions and their associated staff. The only available statistics are:

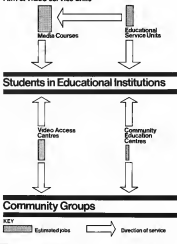
- A list of 136 institutions providing an extent of 500 media course units. This does not include institutions with film and television units which only service the teaching staff (i.e. do not conduct courses).
- The Directory of Media Education Courses and Facilities in Australian Colleges of Advanced Education, compiled by the Department of Education Practices and Extension, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education. This has been compiled from returned questionnaires only, and there will, therefore, be some omissions. This Directory lists 24 institutions, providing 414 course units.

There are three types of employment in tertiary educational institutions which could be appropriate for people with film and television production and operational experience:

- Teaching positions.** These usually require tertiary qualifications.
- Production and technical positions.** It depends on the policy of the institution whether teaching qualifications are required for positions concerned with actual production of films, videotapes and learning loss for social and educational purposes. Many educational institutions will accept production and/or technical experience in lieu of teaching qualifications.
- Support staff.** Includes people with production support skills, such as

Chart C

Film & video service units



photography, graphic art and audio visual experience.

It has been calculated that there are about 150 positions connected with media courses in Australia which would require previous film and television experience.

3. Video access and community education

This sector has two clearly definable networks, Video Access Centres, and Community Education Centres.

Employment tends to fluctuate dramatically in each of these networks because it is as a production/project base. It is, therefore, not

possible to give employment figures. However, the number of video access centres outlined in the table below was established by a telephone survey.

SUMMARY

From these very tentative figures it would seem that there are about 7000 people employed in program-making and engineering jobs in the mainstream film and television industry, and about 600 employed in jobs relating to film and television production in educational and community organisations.

State	Video Access centres	Community Education centres
	1976	1977
New South Wales	2	1
Victoria	2	2
Queensland	1	11
South Australia	1	3
Western Australia	1	2
Tasmania	—	1
North-west Territory	—	1
TOTAL	12	40

Arthur and Caroline Carrilll

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Your work represents important artistic problems about filmmaking. Questions of representation, realism, filmic processes, and meanings have been at the centre of debates in the past 15 years, in print and on film. Like it or not, you have a position within that...

Constance: I am very wary of any work that springs self-consciously from that sort of a position.

What are you wary of?

Corona: That it won't have any true value. I feel we just pursue the things that interest us at a given time.

Arthur: I don't think we have thought out where we fit in relation to what is being done elsewhere. Maybe instinctively we do not want to get terribly involved in thrashing out the uncertainties, or disagreements, for fear of unconsciously adopting some of those uncertainties as a policy.

We have a common affinity in terms of getting our work shown and recognized, and we publish a magazine which is about these people's lives. Apart from liking and respecting their work, we really haven't thought out our relationship in detail. ★

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